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SPATIAL ADHOCISM AS PRACTICE FOR CONFLICT POLITICS: THEORISING URBAN POLITICS IN KOLKATA

A Thesis submitted to The Open University for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in International Development

2020

RAKTIM RAY

**DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, MILTON KEYNES**

To, The Women of Shaheen Bagh and Park Circus

In Love and Solidarity

“गाँव छोड़ब नहीं (We will not leave our village)

जंगल छोड़ब नहीं (Nor our forests)

माए माटी छोड़ब नहीं (Nor our mother-earth)

लड़ाई छोड़ब नहीं” (We will not give up our fight)

-----Bhagwan Majhi (Leader of Adivasi Struggle against Bauxite mining in Kashipur)

Declaration

The thesis declares no conflict of interest. This work referred in this thesis has never been submitted for the award of any degree to any other university.

Raktim Ray

Abstract

This thesis critically examines how people at the urban margins of Kolkata form various kinds of political relationships with the postcolonial state to exert rights in the city. It considers these relationships as conflict politics and analyses its spatial manifestations through the notion of 'spatial adhocism'. Spatial adhocism refers to the quasi-permanent state-political society relations for the mobilisation of resources outside legality. The thesis expands upon existing literature to provide new analytical and empirical insights into the discursive socio-spatial subjectivities of postcolonial cities. It does so, by examining how the practices of conflict politics and spatial adhocism are deployed by the postcolonial state and the political society. The thesis also contributes to the understanding of adhoc geographies which exist in postcolonial urbanism.

The empirical evidence underpinning this thesis is collected from three illustrative case studies from Kolkata, namely Loomtex jute mill worker's movement, Salt Lake anti-eviction movement and Bhangar anti-power-grid movement. Methodologically, this thesis adopts an ethnographic approach, particularly semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participant observation. In terms of comparison, this thesis utilises the experimental comparison method of analysing differential patterns of conflict politics and interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism. The central findings of the thesis are that the relationships between the state, and political society are heterogeneous and that spatial adhocism is omnipresent in postcolonial urbanism. Firstly, the thesis challenges the binary relation of dominance and resistance between the state and the political society and establishes the relation as various forms of engagements. Secondly, it shows that spatial adhocism enables political society to practice various forms of conflict politics with the state to alter hegemonic socio-spatial relations. For the postcolonial state adhoc practices limit conflict politics and helps it to maintain an ambiguous relationship with people at the urban margins. This ambiguity serves a two-fold aim. It helps the state to promote capital accumulation in a contingent way, and it also promotes a selective allowance of rights for the people at the margins of the state. Overall the thesis claims that postcolonial urbanism can be theorised through an understanding of the heterogeneity of discursive political practices and their spatial manifestations.

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My PhD journey is an emotional, self-reflective one and leaving me wondering even if I could ever acknowledge the immense debts I have accrued during this journey. However, I will give it a try.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	5
ABSTRACT	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	7
ABBREVIATIONS USED.....	18
1 INTRODUCTION.....	20
1.1 PROLOGUE	21
1.2 BACKGROUND	24
1.3 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	25
1.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS	27
1.5 RESEARCH OF THE FIELD	28
1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS.....	30
1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.....	31
2 POSTCOLONIAL CONDITIONS	34
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	35
2.2 NEOLIBERAL DISCONTENT AND POSTCOLONIAL CAPITALISM	38
2.2.1 <i>India's Neoliberal Trajectory</i>	40
2.2.2 <i>Capital in the Postcolony</i>	43
2.3 DANCING WITH THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE.....	45
2.4 THEORISING POSTCOLONIAL URBANISM	50
2.4.1 <i>A Comparative Understanding of Postcolonial Urbanism</i>	57
2.5 WHAT CONFLICT POLITICS?	59

2.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	60
3	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY	63
3.1	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	64
3.1.1	<i>Ontological and Epistemological Positioning</i>	<i>65</i>
3.2	METHODOLOGY.....	67
3.2.1	<i>Critical Ethnography.....</i>	<i>68</i>
3.2.2	<i>Experimental Comparison</i>	<i>70</i>
3.3	TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION	73
3.3.1	<i>Field Visits Details</i>	<i>74</i>
3.3.2	<i>Participant Observation and Semi-structured interviews</i>	<i>76</i>
3.3.3	<i>Oral Histories.....</i>	<i>80</i>
3.3.4	<i>Visual Methods.....</i>	<i>81</i>
3.3.5	<i>Content Analysis of Documents.....</i>	<i>81</i>
3.3.6	<i>Sampling Method.....</i>	<i>82</i>
3.3.7	<i>Recruitment Process.....</i>	<i>83</i>
3.4	METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS	84
3.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	88
4	SITUATING THE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD.....	89
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	90
4.2	“HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE AND IN-BETWEEN” - CONSTRUCTION OF SELF IN THE FIELD	90
4.3	STATE STRUCTURE IN INDIA.....	94
4.4	SITUATING THE RESEARCH IN FIELD SITE- KOLKATA	96

4.4.1	<i>Kolkata's Political History</i>	96
4.4.2	<i>Kolkata's Urban History</i>	102
4.5	URBAN MARGINS- NEW GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER AND ENCOUNTERS	107
4.5.1	<i>Urban Margin 1- Primitive accumulation- Loomtex Jute Mill Worker's Movement</i>	109
4.5.2	<i>Urban Margin 2- Bourgeois environmentalism- Anti Eviction Movement in Salt Lake Squatter Settlement</i>	112
4.5.3	<i>Urban Margin 3- New zones of capital circulation- Bhangar Anti Power Grid Movement.</i>	115
4.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY	117
5	DIFFERENTIAL PATTERNS OF CAPITAL CIRCULATION AND SUBSEQUENT CONFLICT POLITICS	119
5.1	BACKGROUND	120
5.2	ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT POLITICS- URBAN MARGIN 1- PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION- LOOMTEX JUTE MILL WORKER'S MOVEMENT.....	121
5.2.1	<i>Historiography of Working-Class Politics in India</i>	121
5.2.2	<i>History of Indian Jute Mills</i>	123
5.2.3	<i>Genealogy of Conflict Politics in Jute Mills of Bengal</i>	125
5.2.4	<i>Labour Demography and Migration History in Loomtex Mill</i>	127
5.2.5	<i>Chronology of Conflict Politics at Loomtex</i>	129
5.2.6	<i>Conflict Politics at Loomtex Mill</i>	132
5.2.7	<i>Multiple Strategies of Containment by the Mill Owners</i>	139
5.3	ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT POLITICS- URBAN MARGIN 2- BOURGEOIS ENVIRONMENTALISM- ANTI EVICTION MOVEMENT IN SALT LAKE SQUATTER SETTLEMENT	141
5.3.1	<i>History of Planned City Salt Lake</i>	141
5.3.2	<i>Chronology of Events in Salt Lake Eviction</i>	143

5.3.3	<i>Displacement and Migration History of the Squatter Dwellers.....</i>	145
5.3.4	<i>Practices of Conflict Politics.....</i>	153
5.3.5	<i>Elite Resistance</i>	160
5.4	ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT POLITICS- URBAN MARGIN 3- <i>BHANGAR ANTI POWER GRID MOVEMENT</i>	163
5.4.1	<i>New Zones of Capital Circulation</i>	163
5.4.2	<i>Chronology of events at Bhangar.....</i>	165
5.4.3	<i>Conflict Politics at the Margins</i>	167
5.4.4	<i>Response from the State</i>	177
5.5	POWER, NETWORKS AND ACTORS.....	181
5.5.1	<i>Power Networks in Loomtex Mill</i>	181
5.5.2	<i>Outcomes of Conflict Politics at Loomtex.....</i>	184
5.5.3	<i>Power Networks in Salt Lake.....</i>	185
5.5.4	<i>Outcomes of Conflict Politics in Salt Lake.....</i>	186
5.5.5	<i>Power Networks in Bhangar.....</i>	187
5.5.6	<i>Outcome of Conflict Politics in Bhangar.....</i>	188
5.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	189
6	INTERCONNECTED TRAJECTORIES OF SPATIAL ADHOCISM	193
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	194
6.2	PRECARIOUS LIVING AT THE URBAN MARGINS	194
6.3	WHAT IS ADHOC IN SPATIAL ADHOCISM.....	197
6.3.1	<i>Adhoc Geographies</i>	198
6.4	INTERCONNECTED TRAJECTORIES OF SPATIAL ADHOCISM	201

6.4.1	<i>Urgency:</i>	202
6.4.2	<i>Mutability</i>	207
6.4.3	<i>Indeterminacy</i>	223
6.4.4	<i>Emergence</i>	228
6.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	234
7	CONCLUSION	239
7.1	INTRODUCTION.....	240
7.2	REVISITING POSTCOLONY	240
7.3	HETEROGENEITY IN CONFLICT POLITICS	243
7.4	NETWORKED MOBILISATION OF POWER	248
7.5	OMNIPRESENCE OF SPATIAL ADHOCISM	250
7.6	COMPARATIVE THEORISATION OF THE URBAN	252
7.7	EPILOGUE.....	254
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	256
	APPENDICES	279

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN THEORISATIONS	54
TABLE 2 STAGES OF FIELDWORK	75
TABLE 3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW DETAILS	79
TABLE 4 SECONDARY DATA MATERIALS.....	82
TABLE 5 DATA ANALYSIS THEMES	85
TABLE 6 CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS	100
TABLE 7 STAGES OF DIRECT ANTAGONISM AT LOOMTEX MILL	139
TABLE 8 DISPLACEMENT HISTORY OF THE RESPONDENTS	146
TABLE 9 STAGES OF CONFLICT POLITICS AND ASSOCIATED MANIFESTATIONS	171
TABLE 10 STATE'S RESPONSE	179
TABLE 11 DIFFERENTIAL PATTERNS OF CONFLICT POLITICS.....	190
TABLE 12 PROPERTIED CITIZENSHIP THROUGH OCCUPANCY	214
TABLE 13 TYPOLOGIES OF ADHOCISM	232
TABLE 14 HETEROGENEITY OF CONFLICT POLITICS.....	247
TABLE 15 STRATEGIES ADOPTED FOR DECENTRING KNOWLEDGE.....	254

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	78
FIGURE 2 KOLKATA'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT DURING COLONIAL PERIOD	103
FIGURE 3 ZONES OF CIRCULATION IN COLONIAL KOLKATA (CALCUTTA) (BASED ON UPJOHN'S SURVEY, (1792-93)	105
FIGURE 4 DIASPORIC CAPITAL	106
FIGURE 5 LOOMTEX MILL AREA.....	110
FIGURE 6 LOOMTEX NEIGHBOURHOOD	111
FIGURE 7 SALT LAKE SQUATTER SETTLEMENT	113
FIGURE 8 PERI-URBAN AREA BHANGAR	115
FIGURE 9 BHANGAR POWER-GRID AREA WITHIN THE REGION.....	116
FIGURE 10 'HORTAL 'BY CHITTAPRASAD BHATTACHARJEE (1961) IN PRINTMAKING	122
FIGURE 11 NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF MILL MANAGER MURDER INCIDENT	130
FIGURE 12 CHRONOLOGY OF LABOUR MOVEMENT AT LOOMTEX MILL.....	132
FIGURE 13 NOTICE OF GATE BAHAR BY MILL MANAGEMENT	140
FIGURE 14 SALT LAKE AREA WITH IDENTIFIED CASE STUDY SQUATTERS	142
FIGURE 15 ANTI EVICTION CAMPAIGN	143
FIGURE 16 NEWSPAPER COVERAGE ABOUT THE EVICTION	145
FIGURE 17 DISPLACEMENT HISTORY OF THE RESPONDENTS.....	148
FIGURE 18 KAMALA'S HOME	149
FIGURE 19 BIMAL'S CURRENT HOME.....	152
FIGURE 20 CITY CENTRE MALL	152
FIGURE 21 RAM'S 'NEW' HOME.....	153

FIGURE 22 SALT LAKE ELECTION POLL VIOLENCE.....	157
FIGURE 23 POSTER BY CITIZEN'S FORUM SALT LAKE	160
FIGURE 24 CHANGING LANDSCAPE.....	163
FIGURE 25 LANDS WAITING FOR CONVERSION	164
FIGURE 26 VILLAGES INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT	168
FIGURE 27 CREATION OF STATE FREE AREAS.....	169
FIGURE 28 NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS	170
FIGURE 29 POSTERS AT THE INITIAL PHASE	173
FIGURE 30 POSTERS AT THE PICK OF THE MOVEMENT.....	174
FIGURE 31 POSTER BEFORE ELECTION.....	175
FIGURE 32 CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT FOR BHANGAR MOVEMENT	176
FIGURE 33 DEMONSTRATION LOCATIONS IN KOLKATA	176
FIGURE 34 PARAMILITARY FORCES GUARDING THE PERIMETER.....	178
FIGURE 35 POWER, NETWORK AND ACTORS, LOOMTEX.....	182
FIGURE 36 POWER, NETWORK AND ACTORS, SALT LAKE	186
FIGURE 37 NETWORK, POWER AND ACTORS, BHANGAR.....	188
FIGURE 38 JUGAAD URBANISM	197
FIGURE 39 GATE BAHAR NOTICE	202
FIGURE 40 SECRET WEAPON	206
FIGURE 41 LOOMTEX LISTED IN JUTE CORPORATION WEBSITE.....	208
FIGURE 42 VARIED LAND-USE CHANGES WITHIN MILL COMPOUND	211
FIGURE 43 ENTRY GATE FOR THE CAR SERVICING PLACE.....	212

FIGURE 44 STAGES OF OCCUPANCY OF WORKER'S QUARTER	213
FIGURE 45 SIMILAR SETTLEMENT LIKE RAM'S AFTER EVICTION IN RAM'S SETTLEMENT	217
FIGURE 46 RAM'S NEW HOUSE FROM INSIDE RAM'S NEW SETTLEMENT	218
FIGURE 47 LAND CONVERSION AT WAITING	221
FIGURE 48 QUIET ENCROACHMENT AT LOOMTEX QUARTER.....	228
FIGURE 49 QUIET ENCROACHMENT IN SALT LAKE	230
FIGURE 50 PRIYA RAVISH MEHRA, COTTON FABRIC FRAGMENT WITH DAPHNE PULP, 14x21 INCHES 2016	237

Abbreviations Used

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSUP	Basic Services for Urban Poor
BT Road	Barrackpore Trunk Road
CBD	Central Business District
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CITU	Centre of Indian Trade Unions
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPIM	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPIML Red Star	Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Red Star
ESI	Employees' State Insurance
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIR	First Information Reports
GBP	Pound Sterling
IJMA	Indian Jute Mill Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
IT	Information Technology
JnNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KMDA	Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority
LC	Local Committee
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly

MP	Member of Parliament
NEP	New Economic Policies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGT	National Green Tribunal
OC	Officer-in-Charge
PGCIL	Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
PF	Provident Fund
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RTI	Right to Information
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SDO	Sub-Divisional Officer
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SPARC	The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers
TMC	All India Trinamool Congress
UAPA	Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank

1 Introduction

“We be many, and they be few. They need us more than we need them. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Arundhati Roy, *Confronting Empire*

1.1 Prologue

In this rapidly urbanising world (54% urban population in 2014), postcolonial cities of Asia are urbanising faster (64%) than cities situated elsewhere (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN 2014). The UN report (2014) has projected that India alone will add 404 million urban dwellers between 2014 and 2050. These 'uneven geographies' are very visible in the Indian context, where 13% of the 377 million urban population is below the poverty line¹ (Census 2011). While the state involves itself in promoting capital intensive urban development by marginalising people at the urban margins, the people at the margins simultaneously exert their rights in the city by resisting it. Thus, the urban becomes a contested terrain. However, this contestation cannot be explained through the lens of dominance and resistance; rather, this contestation shows the complexity of the relationship between the state and people at the urban margins. The postcolonial state promotes capital accumulation by disenfranchising people and simultaneously allows various temporary arrangements following a populist agenda for their political survival. People at the margins, on the other hand, sometimes co-opt with the state through clientelism and sometimes resist the state to push forward their agendas of spatial rights towards a democratic urban future.

Here, neither is the state's capacity shrinking within the context of neoliberal urban governance, nor are the people at the margins only subject to dominance or subjugation. I position this research at this complex juncture of discursive politics and attempt to unpack the multiplicity that exists with various actors for determining urban

¹ Urban Poverty is defined as INR 1000/capita/month which for a family of 5 defined as below INR 5000/month/family in urban areas. From Planning Commission, 2013. Press Note on Poverty Estimates, 2011-12, Govt. of India, New Delhi

I depart from this definition of absolute poverty as this only estimates minimum requirement for subsistence and underestimate several other costs that are associated with the poverty exit strategy like the cost of education, access to basic services. I follow Mitlin and Satterhwaite's (2013) approach of poverty estimation on the basis of 'non-food' needs

From, McFarlane, C., 2016. Review: Urban Poverty in the Global South: Scale and Nature, By Diana Mitlin and David Satterhwaite Reducing Urban Poverty in the Global South, By David Satterhwaite and Diana Mitlin. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 52 (12), pp. 1827-1829.

outcomes. The thesis also critically analyses how the political relationships between various actors (even pro-poor activist groups) are spatially manifested through temporary arrangements. To do so, I develop my research ideas with the help of my own experiences of working as an urban consultant in India, interaction with various stakeholders and gaining knowledge from various academic and non-academic works.

On one such occasion, while I was having a conversation with the late President of Slum Dwellers International in his small Mumbai office, it was interrupted by numerous telephone calls and visitors. He was explaining that he was a slum dweller and how he managed to mobilise and unite slum dwellers of Mumbai over time. He also represented the Alliance of three organisations Slum Dwellers International, SPARC and Mahila Milan each of which has different strategies and objectives to safeguard the interests of slum dwellers of Mumbai. In the middle of our conversation on his pro-poor politics, he showed me several invitation letters addressed to him by various political parties of Mumbai. He stated *“Look; I receive letters from the police, Shiv Sena, Congress, BJP everyone and I am not aligned to anyone. I received several proposals for standing in the election, but I refused to do so. I want to be the kingmaker, not the king.”* This statement shows the complexity that exists within urban politics of Indian cities where on the one hand, the Slum Dwellers International counters the state through resisting evictions and attempts to secure rights for the urban poor. On the other hand, these pro-poor activist’s groups are also not devoid of hegemonic appropriation of power. The Alliance also consciously resisted patronage politics between the urban poor and the political parties of Mumbai (Appadurai, 2001). Appadurai (2001) calls their politics as ‘politics of accommodation’ where without having any alignment to any political parties, Alliance enjoys access to different political groups and acts as a pressure group for pro-poor policies. Appadurai (2001) calls this non-alliance confrontational style politics of Alliance as ‘realpolitik’ which constitutes a discursive political field for the analysis of the state, networks of power and in general urban politics.

In Katherine Boo’s (2012) nonfictional work on Mumbai slums ‘Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity’, the enactment of this ‘realpolitik’ is vividly represented and this motivated me to understand the complexities that allow one slum to be cleared whereas some other slums manage to keep eviction

at bay. Keeping this in the background, to understand the nuances of this ‘realpolitik’ I undertook the task of reviewing Liza Weinstein’s (2014) book “Durable Slum: Dharavi and the Right to Stay Put in Globalizing Mumbai”. Though the book review was never completed, the reading of it in a way shaped the PhD proposal. Weinstein (2014), in her analysis of Dharavi, states that the durability of Dharavi’s existence in a high land value area of Mumbai is dependent on the complex political economy of labour, infrastructure and land politics. For her, this durability of Dharavi challenges the normative understanding of how global capital circulates in the postcolonial urban (Weinstein, 2014). However, Weinstein’s (2014) analysis of ‘precarious stability’ in Dharavi firstly misses how the state also practices certain kinds of informal politics along with the people at the margins. Secondly, her book doesn’t discuss in detail how practices to attain durability are enacted spatially. Finally, her analysis lacks an explanation of how power is mobilised through different networks and forms of relationships that the state and the political society engage in to sustain ‘precarious stability’.

Literature on urban politics in India predominantly focuses on how slum dwellers resist evictions and thus the postcolonial state (Benjamin, 2008; Bhan, 2009; Rao, 2010; Ghertner, 2012; Weinstein, 2014). Much of this literature use informality as a major trope to discuss discursive urban practices. This thesis acknowledges the omnipresence of informality that exists in Indian urban context; however, it broadens the scope of urban politics beyond informality. It provides empirics of different forms of ‘precarious stability’ from Kolkata and maps various forms of relationships that the state and the political society maintain. It also extends the understanding and enactment of urban politics beyond informal settlements by taking cases of three different forms of politics. The thesis builds on labour politics by the mill workers (Case 1 Loomtex Mill), politics of informal settlements (Case 2 Salt Lake anti-eviction) and agrarian politics of land by the farmers (Bhangar anti-power grid) and merges these three categories of politics as urban politics to compare various forms of it. The details of each case study is discussed in chapter 4 (section 4.5). Building on these three case studies, the thesis defines and analyses the ‘precarious stability’ as spatial adhocism and identifies adhoc practices both by the state and political society in all three case studies. The thesis also challenges the binary framework of dominance

and resistance in terms of relationships between the state and political society and analyses the heterogeneity of relationships through conflict politics.

In this introductory chapter, the thesis undertakes four major tasks. Firstly, it sets the context of this research within the dynamic field of urban studies. In addition, it also maps the contribution of this thesis. Secondly, it details the aim and research questions that guide this research. Thirdly, this introductory chapter contextualises the research with a brief explanation of case studies and methods that are adopted to carry out this research. In addition, it also explains the scope and limitations of this research. Finally, by signposting the content of each of the chapter, it discusses the overall structure of this research. The next section discusses the background of this research.

1.2 Background

In Samuel Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot' when one protagonist Estragon proposes Vladimir to leave, Vladimir responds "We're waiting for Godot". Vladimir and Estragon's wait for Godot never ends. Even in the last act of the play when Vladimir finally asks Estragon if they can leave, Estragon agrees to leave. In spite of both agree to leave, the play ends with when none of them moves. (Beckett, 1955)

In the purview of this research, the analogy of 'Waiting for Godot' can be interpreted in three different ways. Firstly, for people at the urban margins of Kolkata the wait for an alternative urban future never ends. Here urban temporality operates at different socio-spatial scales and symbolises contingent violence on the waiting population (Jeffrey, 2008). Secondly, 'waiting' for the people at the urban margins can also be interpreted as a disjuncture between expectations and desire (Brun, 2015). Jeffery (2008) states " But when people are catapulted out of their everyday lives, or when quotidian life radically alters for the worse, the sense of being caught up in a predictable and engaging set of activities that produce known forth-comings can break down and the present can come to weigh on the minds of the individual subject as a type of 'curse' or 'burden'" (Jeffrey, 2008: 955). He also argues that this chronic waiting hinders enactment of radical politics. Similarly Olson (2015) also finds the politics of waiting is repressive and demobilises reforms.

This disjuncture is visible in the context of postcolonial cities where the state subtly encourages adhoc practices to minimise the chances for the political society to involve in conflict politics with the state. Whereas for the political society, this 'adhocness' provides them with a perceived sense of enactment of their rights in the city. With all its precariousness, they wait for an alternative urban future. Waiting is also a creative social space which encourages new forms of relations, political praxis and an alternate future muddled up with uncertainty- a language yet to develop; a future 'yet to come'. This involves making and remaking, categorisation and recategorisations, repetitive actions and continuous iterations. Simon (2004) in his book 'For the City- Yet to Come states' "Sometimes social fields are pieced together as part invoked tradition, part improvisation; sometimes they are a series of inclinations or orientations to respond to contingencies in patterned ways that border on acting like discreet rationalities, yet not as are defined or structured as this term might imply" (Simon 2004: 214). At this juncture, the city becomes that essential discursive field where 'waiting' symbolises violence, capital accumulation and subsequent dispossession and simultaneously an informal political action for exercising enactment of rights in the city.

By focusing on these complex and conflictual practices, this thesis unpacks the spatial and temporal dimensions of political actions between the postcolonial state and the political society. To study this, the next section discusses the aim of the research and subsequent research questions that are formulated to carry out this research.

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

This research focuses on two issues: a) various forms of relationships between the postcolonial state and political society namely conflict politics and b) spatial manifestations of various political actions between the state and the political society namely spatial adhocism. To understand and analyse these, the broader aim of the research is to capture how urban politics shape multiple socio-spatial subjectivities in the postcolonial city, Kolkata. To explore this aim, the research formulates four research questions. The research questions are the following:

- a. How do people at the urban margins engage in various forms of relationships with the postcolonial state?

This question asserts urban margins are 'zones of awkward engagements' between political society, postcolonial capitalism and the state which are discursive political fields for analysing the relationships between the state and the political society. This question was asked because the binary framework of domination and resistance is not adequate enough to understand informal political actions in the context of postcolonial urban. Consequently, this research question provides a typology of conflict politics which not only signifies subaltern subjects but also helps us to analyse postcolonial praxis.

- b. What kind of actors and power networks operationalise heterogeneous relations between the postcolonial state and people at the urban margins?

The heterogeneous relationships between the state and the political society are dependent on mobilisations of power through various networks and subsequent involvement of various actors. This question maps the power network through which different actors capitalise on available resources and operationalise conflict politics.

- c. What nature of adhocism exists in postcolonial urbanism?

This question demonstrates the spatial manifestations of conflict politics and showcases how adhocism is omnipresent in the postcolonial urbanism. This question also answers the complex relationship between conflict politics and spatial adhocism, which sometimes complementary to each other, sometimes counter to each other and other times not at all related to each other. Consequently, this research question is also able to demonstrate the socio-spatial formulation of 'political society'.

- d. How does a comparative understanding of interconnected trajectories between cases offer a framework for theorising postcolonial urbanism?

By treating the city as categories of practices, this question maps the interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism and shows how spatial adhocism is omnipresent in the postcolonial context. Consequently, this question constructs spatial adhocism as a methodological apparatus to theorise postcolonial urbanism.

1.4 Contribution of the thesis

The core aim of the thesis is to propose an analytical framework which captures multiple dimensions of the 'precarious stability' that exist in the postcolonial world, by focusing on specific cases from Kolkata. By doing so, it also proposes how spatial adhocism can be used as an entry point for the theorisations of postcolonial urbanism. The thesis seeks to contribute to four areas. Firstly, this thesis contributes to the theorisation of political society. Chatterjee (2011) sees the discursive political space in the postcolony is constructed by the relations between civil and political society. Civil society represents the domain where recognition of rights is constructed mutually by the citizens and the state. Civil society in the Indian context is sometimes supportive of the demands of political society and sometimes co-opt with the state claims. Whereas political society always negotiates for the recognition of its rights and the state creates spaces of exception for the enactment of these rights (Chatterjee, 2011a). By following Chatterjee's (2011a) formulation, this thesis not only adds a spatiotemporal dimension to the theorisation of political society but also shows how the boundaries between the state, civil society and political society are always elusive and constructed through violence, internal negotiations and circulation of power through various networks. By critiquing Chatterjee's framework of political society, the thesis provides an alternative framework to understand the nature of political society in particular to postcolonial context. The empirics from my fieldwork showcases how the relationships between state, civil society and political society are different in three case studies.

Secondly, the relationship between the state and the political society is often theorised from the binary framework of dominance and resistance. Bringing empirics from three case studies of Kolkata, this thesis challenges this binary framework and establishes the relationship between the state and the political society as far more complex and heterogeneous in nature. Though the state is sometimes located at a distance from everyday life of the people at the margins, it exerts power through its various apparatus to control political society. Simultaneously political society also negotiates and co-opts with this hegemonic appropriation of power to attain certain rights. Instead of a parochial framework of domination and counter-resistance, this thesis proposes a

framework of conflict politics to understand the multiplicity of this relationship where conflict politics signifies antagonism, agonism and conviviality.

Thirdly, the thesis introduces, develops and finally expands the idea and framework of spatial adhocism. This thesis defines spatial adhocism as quasi-legal socio-spatial arrangements between the state and political society. Spatial adhocism enables mobilisation of spatial resources through assemblage of heterogeneous elements for achieving specific goals. The thesis defines spatial adhocism as an incomplete theoretical category which reconfigures itself through iterations and signifies multiple socio-spatial subjectivities. In the context of postcolonial cities spatial adhocism serves three interrelated but conflictual purposes. Firstly, it shows various forms of postcolonial capitalism and its circulation trajectory, which often thrives on adhoc arrangements to promote accumulation without being fully recognised. Secondly, it allows the postcolonial state to present at the urban margins through its silence and hence allows the state to adopt practices for its political survival. Finally, it enables political society to practice conflict politics and creates a discursive political field for quasi allowance of their rights.

Finally, the thesis also provides qualitative empirics from three case studies in Kolkata and contributes to a nuanced understanding of urbanism in Kolkata. Simultaneously, the thesis adopts a comparative method for analysing conflict politics and spatial manifestation. Future research may use the methodological framework as a template for conducting research in comparative urbanism.

1.5 Research of the Field

The research relies on ethnography as a research method for the collection of empirics. This research represents three and a half years of journey through self-negotiations, multiple iterations, trial and error and a few setbacks to finally construct a logical argument. This research is backed by qualitative empirics which were collected during almost a year of fieldwork in Kolkata from three case studies. At the initial stage, literature reviews were conducted based on four themes neoliberalism, citizenship, the idea of rights and urban theory. A review was also made particular to India and Kolkata's urban history.

Case studies and methodology were selected after completion of the reconnaissance field visit to Kolkata. Initially, auto photography was also selected as a method for data collection, along with semi-structured interviews and participant observation. However, the idea of auto photography was dropped during the fieldwork as during the fieldwork, the respondents were not available to take photographs because of the volatile political situations in each of these case studies. A method of experimental comparison was selected to analyse conflict politics and spatial adhocism because of its ability to compare the empirics more from their differences, not similarities and it also helped to identify interrelations between various apparently different parameters (Lancione and McFarlane, 2016). As the research focuses on three case studies, a comparative approach was required for two reasons. First, it helped to understand and compare the circulation of postcolonial capital, political actions and subsequent spatial manifestations in each of the case studies which are very different in nature. Second, it also helped to identify how interconnected trajectories of various political actions together contribute to the understanding of the postcolonial urban.

Kolkata was selected as a city to conduct this research because being the imperial capital of the colonial government, it represents postcolonial conditions of indeterminacy, the multiplicity of social subjectivity and hybridity. Simultaneously, thirty-four years of ruling by a left government in the state of West Bengal makes Kolkata a unique case in terms of patronage politics, land development and anxiety of capitalism. Finally, Kolkata also represents my personal involvement with the city through my own political actions, displacement, love and anger.

Qualitative data collection was undertaken for nine months in 2017 and 2018 through 30 semi-structured interviews (details are given in the appendix) in three case studies. In addition, eight group meetings were held with the community. Photographic documentation, content analysis and participant observation complemented the findings and also helped to triangulate some of the findings.

After data collection, qualitative materials were processed, anonymised and transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed through using NVivo software. Post-fieldwork the data analysis was carried in two ways: thematic network analysis and critical discourse analysis. Thematic network analysis illustrates and summarises the emerging themes from the interviews (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The content analysis

follows the methods of critical discourse analysis to understand the underlying power narratives that exist in each of the cases. Each of the chapters and the full thesis were reviewed by the supervisory team. It was also possible to disseminate the findings at various conferences and with some of the stakeholders in a return field visit in 2018. Consequently, the thesis was rewritten, modified and restricted at various stages in order to incorporate change of the political situation in one case study (Bhangar), recommendations and emerging new literature in the field.

By adopting a postcolonial approach, the thesis serves two purposes. First, it unsettles the subject-object division and signifies subaltern voices in knowledge production. Secondly, it also delinks the knowledge production process from the normative model of modernity. By doing so, it democratises the knowledge system and hence encourages plural conceptions of social emancipation. Processes which are followed for decentring the knowledge production are discussed in detail in the methodology chapter and in conclusion chapter (7.7.).

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This thesis shows three different kinds of urban margins from Kolkata and theorises postcolonial urbanism with the help of the empirics collected from three case studies. However, this thesis restricts itself from any universalising claims about postcolonial urbanism. The proposed framework of spatial adhocism is only claimed as one possible way to understand the relationships between the postcolonial state and the political society, not the only way. The theorisation is only limited to specific patterns of political actions and their spatial manifestations. So, the framework can only be applicable to similar kinds of case studies and empirics. Instead of a generalised framework, the theorisation focuses on speciality of urban practices and outcomes. The case studies do not portray all kinds of political actions that are taking place in Kolkata; rather, it is only limited to labour movements, squatter dwellers movement and anti-land-grabbing movements. However, there are different varieties of industrial actions and land-based movements that are happening in Kolkata and in India. The case studies cannot be considered as the representative samples for all other kinds of industrial actions and land-based movements. The thesis only provides an insight

into the complexity of relationships and spatio-political actions that exist in the postcolonial world.

Due to time constraints, the research only focuses on three case studies. Inclusion of other kinds of political actions by the political society may have increased the breadth of the research. One of the major limitations in the methodology was not to include auto-photography as a research method because of time constraints and unavailability of the respondents. Because of that, the images represent my own perceptions about space and political actions. Visual perceptions of the community and related stakeholders may be different. Simultaneously, the fieldwork process is also shaped by my identity as a Bengali- speaking urban middle-class man and with my political ideology. Though several conscious efforts have been made to limit the academic voyeurism and exoticisation of the subaltern subjects, however, the fieldwork is not entirely devoid of that. Finally, the thesis only demonstrates micro comparisons among the three case studies. A comparative analysis of these political actions across different cities of India may provide an essential understanding of postcolonial urban politics.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters and appendices. The introductory chapter provides the background of the research and the aim and research questions that guided the study. It also provides the areas of contribution of this thesis. Finally, it briefly discusses the methodology, scope and limitations and overall the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two provides a critical review of literature related to postcolonial conditions and identifies gaps in which this research contributes. The postcolonial conditions are reviewed with the help of three thematic areas- postcolonial capitalism, postcolonial state and postcolonial urbanism. To critically engage with the literature on each of these themes, the thesis uses four tropes- heterogeneity, indeterminacy, constituency and relationality. By doing so, it explains how these four tropes are helpful for the understanding of postcolonial conditions. This chapter considers, postcolonial conditions as a 'starting point of critique' to unsettle certain normative understandings of the state, political society and the urban. To elaborate on the 'starting point of

critique' this chapter critically engages in the discussion of state-political society relations through the lens of conflict politics.

Chapter three describes the research approach and methodology that are followed to conduct this research. This chapter clarifies the reasons for relying on a combined approach of 'critical realism' and 'social constructivism' for ontological positioning. In addition, this chapter discusses various stages of the fieldwork and the activities undertaken during fieldwork. It also explains the relative advantages of the ethnographic methods that are adopted for this study. Finally, this chapter also includes data analysis methods and writing strategy for the thesis.

Chapter four, building on the postcolonial conditions situates the research in the field. It does so by explaining the formation of the state in India, Kolkata's urban and political history and finally geo-histories that are associated with each study.

Chapter five is one of the analysis chapters which discusses conflict politics and power, networks and actors for mobilisation of conflict politics. By doing so, it provides the answer to the first two research questions. By analysing empirics from three case studies, this chapter shows how each urban margin is characterised by a particular form of postcolonial capitalism and subsequent counter political actions by the political society to exercise their rights in cities. The differential trajectories of conflict politics that are presented in this chapter helps to understand the heterogeneity of the relationship between the postcolonial state and the political society. Finally, this chapter demonstrates the circulation of power through networks of actors and shows how conflict politics are mobilised through this.

Chapter six presents various forms of spatial adhocism that are practised by the postcolonial state and political society. By doing so, it argues that spatial adhocism enables political society to practice various forms of conflict politics with the state to alter hegemonic spatial and social relations. On the other hand, the postcolonial state also adopts certain adhoc practices to limit conflict politics and to maintain an ambiguous relationship with people at the urban margins. This ambiguity serves a two-fold aim. It helps the postcolonial state to promote capital accumulation without being fully registered, and it also promotes a selective allowance of rights for the people at the margins of the state. Finally, this chapter proposes a framework of spatial

adhocism which can be taken as a methodological apparatus to theorise postcolonial urbanism.

Chapter seven summarises and compares the findings from the analysis chapters. This chapter also revisits previously described research questions and explains how the empirical analysis answers these research questions. This chapter then signposts certain necessary conditions to analyse and theorise postcolonial urbanism from elsewhere. Finally, this chapter concludes by reflecting on the methods that are adopted for this research for decentring knowledge production process and discusses the contribution that this research makes in the dynamic field of urban theorisation.

The appendices contain participant information sheets, semi-structured interview questionnaire, ethics approval form and list of documents consulted.

2 Postcolonial Conditions

“We are twelve in my body. We are packed like sardines.” In other words, the being that I am exists each time in several modes—or, let us say, several beings, which, although sometimes mutually exclusive, are nevertheless inside one another.”

-Achille Mbembe, On the Postcolony

2.1 Introduction

The postcolonial world for a substantive period of time was considered as third world, underdeveloped or developing nations. These vocabularies were imparted by the intertwined concept of modernity and developmentalism to the 'non-western' world where development needs to be done, or development is at waiting. This automatically puts the non-western world as a subjugated category of the western world. By citing King (2004), Robinson (2006) argues this as the West's self-characterisation against 'otherness' and 'elsewhere'. This 'otherness' has its roots in the colonial imagination, which undermined contextuality and differences along with the hegemonic appropriation of power (Robinson, 2006). Over the years, the idea of western modernity and associated politics of developmentalism have been challenged by the academics majorly by the postcolonial scholars (Escobar, 1992; Robinson, 2006). As a critique of development discourse because of its hegemonic notions of knowledge production, Escobar (1992) urges to decentre development. In support of that, he proposes a politics of post-development, which calls for socio-political and epistemological transformations by focusing on everyday repetitive and habitual practices of the 'local' (Escobar, 2000, 2007).

Following these arguments, this thesis critically engages with postcolonial theories and looks at how political society forms various kinds of relationship with the postcolonial state and subsequently demands their spatial claims in the city, particularly in Kolkata. I argue that these relationships between the postcolonial state and the political society are shaped by the nature of postcolonial capital and state in which the urban acts as a discursive field where the political relationships are enacted spatially. To do so, this chapter discusses postcolonial conditions with three intertwined thematic areas viz. capital, state and the urban and finally constructs the political relationships between the state and political society as conflict politics which challenges the binary framework of dominance and resistance. The introductory chapter has already explained the research questions which guide this thesis. Based on these research questions, this chapter highlights existing gaps within the scholarly works related to these thematic areas within the purview of postcolonial theories and finally demonstrates how this research proposes an alternative method for theorising postcolonial conditions. It does so, by critically engaging with the literature with the

help of four tropes, namely heterogeneity, indeterminacy, constituency and relationality, which are also used for the purpose of empirical analysis in the following chapters. These tropes are particularly used to explain the postcolonial conditions because this thesis argues: a. postcolony represents a multiplicity in terms of relations, b. the postcolonial temporality is constructed through negotiations between the past, and the present c. as a political project postcolony represents entanglement of various spatial patterns which are often indistinguishable d. spatiotemporally postcolony is dynamic and relational.

Mahasweta Devi's (1965) fiction 'Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha' focuses on the tribal life of the fictional *Pirtha* block located in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Devi's protagonist Puran Sahay, a journalist, travels to *Pirtha* to gather information about the ghostly creature Pterodactyl. Here Puran represents the modernity of the outside world and Pterodactyl symbolises the unknown which is obscured by a sense of otherness. Puran often encounters a sense of difference and uncanniness during his stay in *Pirtha*. Puran's lack of understanding of the people of *Pirtha* and their entanglements with the Pterodactyl allegorically points modernity's inability to understand the difference and atypical subjectivities. These differences are constructed through untranslatability and inadequacy of vocabularies to capture the differences. Jazeel's (2018a) analysis shows that the Pterodactyl "stands for this difference, for the poetics of this incommunicable experience" (Jazeel, 2018a: 15).

Devi's (1965) fiction demonstrates how modernity fails to recognise the 'other' (here the postcolony) because modernity always constructs arbitrary category and rationalises those categories through a normative framework of analysis. It also delimits the recognition of 'others' as the 'other', often disrupts those categories and challenges modernist conceptualisations. At this juncture, the postcolony becomes that 'other' world which exists within and also beyond the conception of modernity. The appropriation of this 'other' world in the normative framework of modernity is often associated with colonialism. Postcolony or in Gaonkar's (1999) words 'alternative modernity' often violently critical about reconfiguration and appropriation. This critical perspective attempts to capture differences which exist in the relationally connected past and simultaneously exists in the present (Jazeel, 2018a; Samaddar, 2018). Here differences do not signify diversity rather alterity. For Bhabha (1994) postcolony is a

geography of difference and 'otherness' which unsettles binary social categorisation of modernity. He states " the postcolonial project, at the most general theoretical level, seeks to explore those social pathologies - 'loss of meaning, conditions of anomie' - that no longer simply 'cluster around class antagonism, [but] break up into widely scattered historical contingencies'" (Bhabha, 1994: 171). Postcolony also represents a hybrid position which continuously contests domination and subordination and seeks to develop a 'politics of representation' through readjustments, dilution, a reinterpretation of categories (Parry, 1997). Samaddar (2018) states that postcolonial conditions involve temporal dimension where temporality constructs its own politics and subvert it through iteration of categories and specificity. He also states " postcolonial as a condition, an age—global, yet local in many ways—and as a predicament, an age that speaks of a condition with its contradictions, a site of new struggles, contradictory possibilities, and new transformations" (Samaddar, 2018: 19).

Devi's (1965) story helps us to the point of departure and decentres our thinking process through differences and untranslatability. Here, Postcolonial conditions are also the starting point of a critique. It critiques historicity, forms new subjects and continuously explores the multiplicity of meaning, categories and praxis (Samaddar, 2018). For Young (2014), the critique of historicity is shaped by the politics of invisibility. Postcolonial interrogation includes interrelated histories of violence and hegemonic appropriation of power, which are often contingent in nature (Young, 2014). To capture these, an alternative method of analysis is required. This alternative method of analysis originates from a 'history of present' where an 'unfinished past shapes, modifies and challenges the project of 'unstable present' (Raghuram, Noxolo and Madge, 2014). Following Raghuram et al. (2014), the thesis uses four tropes to understand postcolonial conditions. Heterogeneity in regard to postcolonial conditions is not limited to multiplicity; rather, it can be considered as a discursive field in response to the heterogeneity of agencies and power networks (Prakash, 1992). Heterogeneity also provides the opportunity to analyse the assemblage of power, relations, praxis and network by going beyond a methodological fixity. Indeterminacy critiques the spatiotemporal fixity of the subjects. It makes postcolony as an iterative method of analysis to capture the multiple temporalities which are products of 'balanced' tensions and negotiation between unfinished pasts and unstable presents (Raghuram, Noxolo and Madge, 2014). In the context of postcolony, constituency

unsettles binary constructions and theorise postcolony as a hybrid subject. This hybridity is applicable to understand the relation between the state and political society (discussed in chapter 5). Finally, postcolony is represented by relationality. Here relationality represents a continuous iteration of subjects, categories and power networks. This dynamism unsettles categories and continuously recategorises through iterations.

To understand the conditions that shape postcoloniality and identify the gaps within the current literature, the next section first briefly discusses the nature of neoliberal capitalism and how it is appropriated in the Indian context. Then, it discusses how postcolonial capitalism follows a different trajectory.

2.2 Neoliberal Discontent and Postcolonial Capitalism

Post-Fordist economy promoted consumption-driven capital accumulation along with technological and institutional change which also expanded the institutional capacity and created new forms of international financial institutions (Albo, 2007). The complex rescaling of the political economic system includes internationalisation of the economy through the extension of the global capital circuits to the countries of Asia, Africa and South America. This also includes diversification of traditional industrial capital to new forms (hedge funds, private equity, etc.). Rescaling of global capital was also coupled with institutional rescaling where transnational entities like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) influenced the state to shape the economic policies. This complex political economic process, known as neoliberalism, focuses on imparting growth through minimising state functions by securing private property rights, increasing participation of private firms as 'growth engines' and deregulation of capital markets. Through these, neoliberalism aimed to achieve individual entrepreneurial freedom (Harvey, 2005). This principle of individual freedom and wellbeing bears the western tradition of modernity and liberal values (Papaioannou 2012). Replacing its position from the service provider, the state has become a facilitator between people and private parties which are visible with the increasing number of Public-private partnership (PPP) projects related to infrastructure and basic service delivery (Banerjee-Guha, 2009; Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010).

The logic of neoliberalism has been appropriated in different parts of the world depending on the political economic context. Capital's life history in different parts of the world differs. Barnett (2005) argues work on neoliberalism always portray the recent history's shift from "public collective values" to "private individual values". Along with this, neoliberalism as a hegemonic project often looked at capitalist formations as the variegated realities of a single project with limited understanding of how everyday lives shape the capitalist formation and vice versa (Barnett, 2005). Barnett (2005) also encourages us to look beyond the overarching formation of neoliberalism as a hegemonic project and helps to look at the social relations and formation of differentiated forms of neoliberalism. The contextual understanding of neoliberalism is also shaped by the way each country encountered, negotiated and appropriated modernity and colonialism. The literature on neoliberalism often makes universalising claims and give little importance on how capitalism has been appropriated in the postcolonial world and how the postcolonial state has responded to it. The logic of shirking state capacity in basic service delivery and welfare programs with the advent of neoliberalism fails to address the reality of the postcolonial world. Here, the postcolonial state sometimes acts as a facilitator of the neoliberal project but sometimes also follows populist logics for its political survival and responds to claims of the marginalised communities partially.

As the state formation process in the postcolonial world is different, the universal logic of neoliberalism often provides a parochial and deterministic view of that. To avoid this, the thesis critically examines postcolonial capitalism with a particular focus to India and argues how neoliberalism in Indian context was appropriated and the entanglement of the Indian state in the process of appropriation. By doing so, it limits the universalising logic of capitalism and allows a more comprehensive and contextual analysis of postcolonial capitalism. Instead of a singular political-economic entity, Brenner et al. (2010) describe neoliberalism as a syndrome than a single entity. By citing Mittelman (2000), they state, it is important to analyse how the syndrome creates differentiated patterns of activities across various scales, sites and territories (Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010). Brenner et al. (2010) also argue that different geopolitical histories, diverse economic and institutional capacities produced unpredictable neoliberal forms of governance. However, following Barnett's (2004) critique as discussed above, analysis by Brenner et al. (2010) is also not devoid of treating

neoliberalism as a singular hegemonic project with multiple manifested forms across different places.

The next section discusses the Indian economy's neoliberal path and points out how India is a unique case in the field of postcolonial capitalism.

2.2.1 India's Neoliberal Trajectory

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), proposed by the IMF and WB to less developed countries (LDCs) aimed to promote capital accumulation. To eliminate any distortions in the market, the program promoted privatisation of services and limited state intervention (Deshpande and Sarkar, 1995). India was not an exception. The New Economic Policies (NEPs) of 1991-94 has observed truncated shift from a traditional agriculture-based economy to export orientation and service sector-led growth. Das (2015) argues that the NEPs were promoted to attract foreign investment, expansion of the export market for Indian business conglomerates and obtain foreign technology. He states "The NEP, therefore, is the neoliberal program of the bourgeois class first, and a government policy second. To the extent that neoliberalism is a government policy, it represents the "wish-list" of the big business which gets a sympathetic hearing from the pro-market state managers. As well, much-needed support is provided by the opinion-makers in the media and by so-called intellectuals, including some from imperialist countries" (Das 2015: 716-717). This shows how hegemonic institutions were created by delimiting the role of the state to promote capital accumulation. By taking the example of Mumbai, Harris (1995) identifies how the reshaping of the economic structure was done as a response to global capital and transnational forces. For him, this restructuring holds supreme importance as he describes the economic policies of developing worlds were 'self-hindering' and suffered from 'lack of diversification' (Harris, 1995). This parochial analysis of the urban economy of Mumbai undermines the capacity of and diversification of informal economy that exists in Mumbai. Harris (1995) also fails to understand how transnational entities imposed hegemonic governance in cities like Mumbai. Mahadevia (2008) identifies a two-fold process of disenfranchisement of urban poor. Firstly, the low wage rate of labour in comparison to global standards has created increasing income inequality and low living standards. This also disenfranchises the poor because of their inability to pay for basic services. Simultaneously, higher

speculation and volatility created a distorted urban land market where housing is inaccessible for the majority of the population because of their low wage rate. The urban being the apostle for 'growth' has become the sites for accumulation of capital through creating lucrative compartmentalised spaces for investment. This hyperurbanism has fuelled indiscriminate land-use changes.

The neoliberal urban trajectory in India creates two interrelated situations. On the one hand, the perceived narrative of 'urban as growth engine' creates a myopic vision of development. On the other hand, there is 'bourgeoisification' of the postcolonial cities through the rise of the middle-class (Ghertner, 2012). This condition has further intensified spatial segregation where people at the urban margins become 'constitutive outsiders' of this newly developed institutionalised real estate market (Baviskar, 2006). Baviskar (2006) also argues following this logic; that evictions have been legitimised in the name of public interest. She states "Apocalyptic visions of urban anarchy and collapse are ranged alongside dreams of gleaming towers, clean streets and fast-moving cars. Utopia and dystopia merge to propose a future where the poor have no place in the city" (Baviskar 2006: 90). Goldman (2011) in his study of real estate dynamics in the context of India shows how new vocabularies of urban are developed by converting "dead capital"² into high value "liquid capital". He describes it as 'speculative urbanism' (Goldman, 2011). Speculative urbanism flourishes through the removal of dead capital from the city and incorporating entrepreneurial mechanism of speculation with the help of global capital. As an urban development program, the guidelines of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) were drafted following this vocabulary. The sub-mission of JnNURM named as Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) was created to represents a pro-poor narrative. However, it focuses on assets creation as an exit strategy for poverty. It states "securing effective linkages between asset creation and asset management" (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation 2005: 3). This follows Hernando de Soto's (2000) model, which sees poor people as 'heroic entrepreneurs' and formalises

² Dead Capital: Form of informally held asset which cannot easily be bought, sold, transferred and a hindrance for investment purposes.

From de Soto H. (2000): *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, New York, Basic Books; pp 6, 7

informality through land titling (Roy, 2009c, 2014). This pro-poor rhetoric also reinforces the principles of individual property rights based on liberal values of Western democracy.

The 'neoliberal turn' in Harvey's (2005) work is identified as a neo-imperialist model of the USA. One of the important limitations of Harvey's work is the universalisation of 'neoliberal turn'. Harvey's analysis pays inadequate attention to how each nation-state has modified the 'neoliberal turn' based on their differential geo- histories. His analysis does not define the paradox of a pro-poor program (BSUP) within the framework of a neoliberal urban program. This 'symptomatic silence' about the Janus faced identity of the postcolonial state fails to provide the framework for understanding postcolonial capitalism (Castree, 2006).

However, in the context of postcolonial world conceptualisation class differs from the Marxist analysis. In the context of India, how the working-class identity is often entangled with various social formations like caste, religion and language in the context of jute mill workers is discussed in chapter 5. Harvey (2007) is surprisingly silent about this dynamic aspect of class. Several authors (Fernandes, 2004; Ghertner, 2011, 2012; Roy, 2011b) show that the rise of the middle-class in the postcolonial world also contributed to the dispossession of people at the margins. The global recession of 2008 has proved the inadequacy and anxiety of the neoliberal project. However, neoliberalism has not ceased but has become a formless syndrome what Peck (2010) calls as 'zombie neoliberalism'. Peck argues that neoliberalism is entering a new phase where it is 'dead but dominant' (Peck 2010). He states "The brain has apparently long since ceased functioning, but the limbs are still moving, and many of the defensive reflexes seem to be working too. The living dead of the free-market revolution continues to walk the earth, though with each resurrection, their decidedly uncoordinated gait becomes even more erratic" (Peck 2010: 109). Peck's (2010) analogy helps us to understand a different trajectory of neoliberal capitalism. The logic of free-market economy failed during the last recession, which created income inequalities and subsequently political right has emerged across different parts of the world. However, logic of privatisation, austerity measures and dwindling welfare programs are still existing and shaping political economies of the state.

This thesis focuses on various spatial practices by people at the urban margins, which contest the capital accumulation and subsequent disenfranchisement process within the purview of the political economy of the postcolonial state. To do so, the next section discusses the characteristics of postcolonial capital in the context of India.

2.2.2 Capital in the Postcolony

Global capitalism has not ceased its circulation; rather, it is abysmal in reordering spatial organisations and creating new routes of circulation. This tendency of never-ending circulation of global capital has already been identified as 'zombie neoliberalism' where capital is 'dead but dominant' (Peck, 2010). I take a slight departure from the logic of 'dead but dominant' form of this. This departure can be well understood with an in-depth analysis of postcolonial capitalism. In his work 'Provincializing Europe' Chakraborty (2010) argues 'globalisation of capital' differs from 'capital's universalisation'. The logic of difference, he argues, lies in the historical difference that exists between the western world (History 1) and the postcolonial world (History 2). These differences are often associated with the relationship between the colonisers and colonial subjects. He states that these differences are often proliferated and intensified through capital's own circulation. He further argues that capital encounters, negotiates and sometimes overcomes this historical difference in its circulatory path. With the help of Marx's categorisation of capital's 'being' and 'becoming' Chakraborty (2010) explains capital's differential circulation logic. For Marx, 'being' indicates the state in which capital is yet to come in its actual form and 'becoming' refers to the historical process of 'being'. This automatically puts 'becoming' as a necessary pre-condition for capital in a chronological sense. However, the life history of postcolonial capital unsettles this chronological ordering as 'being' and 'becoming' are often intermingled with each other. Chakraborty (2010) argues the postcolonial world or history 2 as an inherent component of the capital's origin. He writes "History 2s are thus not pasts separate from capital; they inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the runoff capital's own logic" (Chakraborty 2010: 64). Here, becoming represents openness and dynamicity of the capital. This is also visible in the trajectory of postcolonial capital.

In history 2 primitive accumulation is neither dead nor dominant rather it is in transition and reproduces certain other routes of circulation (Samaddar, 2018). Here, capital

allows multiple formations and simultaneously, these forms are constituent of the 'being'. As discussed before (ibid 2.2) the literature on neoliberalism (Deshpande and Sarkar, 1995; Albo, 2002; Harvey, 2004, 2007) often discuss how the state's capacity is delimited with the privatisation of services and enhanced individual entrepreneurial freedom. However, this is partially true in the context of the postcolonial Indian state. Here, the state, on the one hand, legitimises primitive accumulation and on the other hand, it also doesn't allow primitive accumulation to annihilate the dispossessed. It rather accommodates the dispossessed at the margins of the state for capital's own survival strategy what Sanyal (2014) describes as a selective deployment by the state. At this juncture, the state becomes an important site for the ethnography of capital. This ethnography of capital at the site of the postcolonial state allows us to analyse the *Janus-faced* identity of the postcolonial state. One way, the postcolonial state encourages capitalist accumulation by creating 'disposition of space in the form of zones' (Samaddar, 2015) and on the other hand, for its own political and ideological condition it also promotes a reversal of that accumulation (Sanyal, 2014). This contradictory practices by the postcolonial state are discussed in detail in the next section.

From the above discussion, it is clear that dispossession and rehabilitation in the context of postcolonial capital may occur simultaneously. Dispossession happens for the capital's own survival, and rehabilitation happens for the state's political survival. So, here "being is forever postponed", and capital reaches "to a perpetual state of becoming" (Sanyal, 2014: 61). This complex process of formation of postcolonial capitalism leads to a new politics what Sanyal (2014) calls 'politics of exclusion'. Here politics of exclusion does not happen because of the capital's inability to transform pre-capital into the surplus value for accumulation. Rather, exclusion of the dispossessed happens at the margins of the state, which is created by the primitive accumulation of the same capital. At the margins, the 'need economy' exists in the form of informality. The expansion of capitalist accumulation happens through creating new circuits for accumulation along with primitive accumulation. This results in the dispossession where the dispossessed are usually rehabilitated in the 'need economy' of the informality (Sanyal, 2014). This character of postcolonial capital also highlights its indeterminacy through which accumulation and marginalisation happen simultaneously with the rehabilitation of people at the margins. To understand this

indeterminacy of the postcolonial capital, it is also essential to understand the nature of the postcolonial state, which supports this erratic circulation of the capital, which is discussed in the next section.

2.3 Dancing with the Postcolonial State

The state becomes an important ethnographic site to understand the various forms of capital and its circulation. As previously stated, (ibid 1.3) this research explores the heterogenous relationship that people at the urban margins maintain with the state. An ethnographic analysis of the state also allows us to see how capital forms various circulations routes at the urban margins with direct support from the state. To do so, this section maps different scholarly discussions about state and its relations with the civil and political society. Understandings beyond the state as an institutional apparatus also helps us to see how different social relations (particular to the dispossessed) and geo-histories contributes to the state formation and constructs state as a discursive political field. Finally, this section also identifies potential gaps in the scholarly work where this thesis can contribute.

The thesis demonstrates various practices of the everyday state where it only focuses on the regional and local state, i.e. West Bengal government and urban and rural local body institutions, respectively. However, to understand the nuances of the state institutions and how various state-society relations are constructed, the thesis briefly describes the idea of federalism in the Indian context in chapter 4 (section 4.3).

To understand state-society relations, it is also imperative to unpack how the state is conceptualised by various schools of thought. The Marxian idea of the state looks into the extension of social relations of production to social relations of control. Through these social relations of control, the state protects private property and facilitates market operations on behalf of capital (Jessop, 2012). By citing Gramsci (1971) Jessop (2012) sees the state as practices of dialectic class relations, which not only justify and maintain domination but also manages certain legitimacy of the people under control (society). This Marxian analysis makes a clear distinction between the state and society (those who are subject to domination). This approach has two limitations in the context of the postcolonial state. Firstly, it separates society from the state. The boundary between state and society is always elusive as the state produces

multiple arrangements and relations through the iconography of languages, infrastructure for institutions, symbolic gestures and disciplinary power (Mitchell, 1991; Hansen and Stepputat, 2001). Simultaneously it also operates in a ghostly nature with an uncanny presence in everyday life (Das, 2004).

As Das (2004) notes, “it is important to keep in mind that the forms of governmentality are constituted here through sporadic, intermittent contact, rather than through an effective panoptic system of surveillance” (Das, 2004: 231). By citing the example of an immigration detention centre Griffiths (2013) shows, that state is always present at a distance and operates through several intermediaries. She states that the state is inevitably a site for ambiguity and heterogeneity (Griffiths, 2013). For her, the state always deploys chaos, particularly when it is weak or in retreat. Although Griffith (2013) correctly points out the indeterminacy of the state, I argue the notion of the ambiguity of the postcolonial state does not portray its weakness. This ambiguity is historically created, and the postcolonial state consciously maintains this ambiguity and strengthens it through various practices at the margins. These practices serve the purpose of ‘politics of exclusion’ (ibid 44) where the state rehabilitates the dispossessed in the “wasteland” which is created by the primitive accumulation of capital. The operationalisation of ‘politics of exclusion’ happens through what Goodfellow (2019) calls ‘informal politics’ and argues it involves “both convention and contention”. Here, informal politics cannot only be read as a residual category of the formal political practices by the state. Rather, informal politics intersects with the formal practices of the state and negotiates for its representations and sometimes also changes the operationalisation strategy of the formal practices. Here, the state is never an already constructed entity but under continuous formations (Goodfellow, 2019). Goodfellow’s analysis of the state in the context of Kampala, Uganda helps us to understand the variety of political relations that exists in the postcolonial context between the formal state institutions and society.

In the context of the Indian state, the ambiguity of state practices is part of its colonial history. Kaviraj (2005), in his analysis, shows the colonial state was systematically bundled with various functions. These functions were also associated with state-building sequentially. First, the colonial power received legal power for trade, which was followed by territorial protection and revenue collection through the expansion of

the territory. Slowly, the ruling practices came into power. These have formed an intermediate hybrid form of the state where it maintained a quasi-hegemonic power with society. This was also done with the legitimacy of the aspirational, modernist, upper class English educated Indians (Kaviraj, 2005). Here, the modern state formation process was subtle and produced new constitutive relations with society. The hybrid state was an intermediate form between Empire-state and sovereign-state. This hybridity also helped the state to represent itself as an apparatus for redistributive policies in broader political imaginations. Several conflicting and confusing mechanisms were developed for subtle exploitation along with redistribution. This also led to the loss of legitimacy of the welfare state coupled with crisis management apparatus for poor people. On the one hand, it selectively enables people to exert their rights and voice their demands. On the other hand, it is also used as a coercive apparatus (Gupta, 2006). Das (2004) calls this an oscillation between a rational mode and a 'magical mode of being'. She also states the state deliberately makes its ghostly presence in those sites to reinstate hegemony and domination, reproduces new subjects and metaphors as a form of 'paradox of illegibility' (Das, 2004). With the help of Bourdieu (1999) Hansen and Stepputat (2001) describe that the state operationalises its language of stateness through four types of capital: violence and economic capital, informational capital (enumeration), symbolic capital (judiciary) and together they constitute 'capital etatique' or the state capital. Through these capitals, the state not only reproduces norms and functions of its citizen-subjects but also for itself to maintain the stateness (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001). How these four capitals are operationalised in the context of India is discussed in chapter 4, which unpacks the federal state structure in India.

Marxian conceptualisation often considers society always as the subjugation of state. In the context of the postcolonial state, the subaltern subjects are not an only mere spectator of domination, but they challenge, negotiate and sometimes reproduce the languages of domination. Here, I follow Jazeel and Legg's (2019) theorisation of subaltern subjects. They state, "subject here refers to the socially and spatially situated individual who inhabits categories and networks that stretch out beyond and pre-exist, them". (Jazeel and Legg, 2019: 12). By subaltern subjects, I mean those who neither originate from the dominant discourse nor are dependent on the dominant discourse for their existence. They are rather autonomous subjects having multiple relations with

the dominant discourse (Spivak, 1988). These subaltern subjects operate, modify, negotiate the dominant discourses both from inside and outside the network of dominant power relations. “.....subalternity erupts within the system of dominance and marks its limits from within, that its externality to dominant system of knowledge and power surfaces inside the system of dominance, but only as an intimation, as a trace of that which eludes the dominant discourse.” (Prakash, 2000: 288). Prakash (2000) also argues that the subaltern subjects force dominant discourses for contradictions and dislocations. I slightly depart from Prakash’s argument and argue the possibilities of rupture are dependent on the nature of the relationship, infrastructure to navigate across power networks and capitalisation of resources. This would be further elucidated with empirics from three case studies in chapter 5.

In the context of postcolonial India, the relationships between the state and the subaltern subjects are far more complex. Here the state often dispossessed the subaltern subjects but also simultaneously allows them to exert their rights selectively through various networks of power. By doing so, it seeks to make structural power reappear. Kaviraj (2010) in his book ‘Imaginary Institutions of India’ shows that actual political suffering sometimes happens through the neighbourhood tyrants where the state exists as a distant subject (Kaviraj, 2010). This subtle invasion of the state at the local level of politics makes them simultaneously distinct and distant which sometimes allows the subaltern subjects to become part of it which they perceive as an exterior (Lund, 2006). The relationship between the postcolonial state and political society also shows this dualism. ‘Political society’ by Chatterjee’s (2011) definition is the discursive field for mediations and bargaining. For Chatterjee (2011), ‘political society’ operates outside the legitimacy of law, whereas ‘civil society’ is governed by the rule of law and spaces of corporate capital. Randeria (2006) in her analysis shows that colonisers brought the idea of civil society in India during the 19th century. She states this sphere was created outside the colonial state to delimit state influence on colonial subjects, and simultaneously colonial subjects can delimit the influence of the state in the public sphere (Randeria, 2006). For Randeria (2006) civil society in India was formed by the double articulation of modernity and tradition where European modernity was entangled with the history of the colonial subjects. However, I take a departure from this theorisation. The selective allowance of rights was established through civil society in India firstly to deploy a discursive relation of subordination and domination.

Secondly, by this, the colonisers attempted to legitimise their authority over colonial subjects. However, political society sometimes challenges and sometimes co-opt with the authority. Here, I consider Sen's (2007) definition of civil society as an apt one. He states "a society or community that is ruled by norms of 'civility'; a section of society that has become – in its own terms, and by its own definition – 'civilised'" (Sen, 2007: 54). This represents civil society as a hegemonic subject where the 'uncivil' political society is always subject to subjugation. To understand the complex relationship between the postcolonial state, civil and political society, Chatterjee's (2011) theorisation is helpful.

For Chatterjee (2011), political society is distinctively different from civil society as it exists outside the legal system. He states, "But the space of politics became effectively split between a narrow domain of civil society where citizens related to the state through the mutual recognition of legally enforceable rights and a wider domain of political society where governmental agencies dealt not with citizens but with populations to deliver specific benefits or services through a process of political negotiation" (Chatterjee, 2011: 13-14). The postcolonial state makes political calculations about the demands of the political society and selectively represents that as an exception of the norm. This discursive politics unsettles the norm and creates new political vocabularies like an exception of law. Chatterjee's (2011) theorisation of political society is essential to understand the complex relationship between the postcolonial state and its subjects.

However, in the case of postcolonial cities, sometimes, it is difficult to draw clear distinctions between 'civil society' and 'political society' (Baviskar and Sundar, 2008; Miraftab, 2009). The presence of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) as power brokers often makes Chatterjee's conception of 'political society' a fluid one. For Baviskar & Sundar (2008), the management of internal tensions between 'civil and 'political society' in the context of India represents an innovative mechanism of politics. They also state Chatterjee's conception of 'political society' fails to identify the discourse of domination and their internal violence within political society. Roy (2009a) in her work also identifies how civil society simultaneously resists and also co-opts with the state to create their own rule of governing which she calls 'civic governmentality' (Roy, 2009a). The case of this civic governmentality is already

discussed before (ibid 1.1) in my own encounter with the Slum Dwellers International. In the context of the fluidity between 'civil and political society' Swyngedouw (2005) states, "In fact, a fuzzy terrain was produced, some- where in-between, but articulating with, state and market, but irreducible to either; a terrain that was neither state nor private, yet expressing a diverse set of social activities and infused with all manner of social power relations, tensions, conflict and social struggles" (Swyngedouw 2005: 1996). At this juncture, political society becomes a constitutive part of the postcolonial state which sometimes oppose the idea of the state and sometimes attempts to reconfigure it from within (Hart, 2015; Ghertner, 2017). To explain this nature of the postcolonial state Ghertner (2017) says "two figures of the postcolonial state that move beyond narrower spatial metaphors that read that state either as a stable, hierarchical entity—what I shall call the topographic state—or as a flat, wholly malleable assemblage without consequential spatial order or historicity" (Ghertner, 2017: 733).

The above discussion about the postcolonial state clearly highlights how four tropes of postcolonial conditions exist in it. Indeterminacy is found in the way state operates with its subjects through ambiguity and often its presence through silence. The relationship between the state and political society is heterogeneous and thus creates a hybrid discursive field where these relations interplay. Political society is not only a constitutive form of the postcolonial state but also maintain heterogeneity of relationships with it. Finally, categories are always relational in the context of the postcolonial state, where categories are made for further recategorisations.

2.4 Theorising Postcolonial Urbanism

The urban is essentially the apostle for development over the last decade, which was predicted by Lefebvre (2003) as 'urban revolution'. For him 'urban revolution' is a transformative paradigm³ (Lefebvre [1970], Lefebvre, 2003). This transformative paradigm one way is interpreted as "polymorphic, variable and dynamic" subject which

³ "By "urban revolution" I refer to the transformations that affect -contemporary society, ranging from the period when questions of growth and industrialisation predominate (models, plans, programs) to the period when the urban problematic becomes predominant, when the search for solutions and modalities unique to urban society are foremost".

extends beyond the conventional understanding of territorial limits (Brenner and Schmid, 2013). For others, the urban is the discursive field which acts as an oeuvre of subaltern political actions (Roy, 2011b; Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti, 2013). Urban theorisation has been a much debated and heavily researched topic in the recent decade. Recent debates on the conceptualisation and methodology of understanding the urban are intensified with emerging new concepts, empirics and methodologies. Brenner and Schmid (2015) see this intensification as “a sign of creative renaissance rather than of intellectual crisis” (Brenner & Schmid 2015: 154). The ongoing discussions on the urban theorisation and emerging new conceptual frameworks also signify the dynamism and ontological reflexivity that global urbanism demands. Key theorisations relevant for this thesis include ‘planetary urbanisation’ (Brenner and Schmid, 2011; Merrifield, 2013); ‘comparative urbanism’ (Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Robinson, 2016a, 2016b); ‘urban assemblage’ (McFarlane, 2009, 2011); ‘provincializing urbanism’ (Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti, 2013) and ‘relational comparison’ (Hart, 2016). However, this thesis uses ‘comparative urbanism’ as the major framework and applies it in the postcolonial context of Kolkata.

Brenner and Schmid’s (2015) proposition ‘planetary urbanisation’ addresses certain fundamental questions regarding the theorisation process. They postulate seven distinctive theses⁴ to eliminate the territorial understanding of the urban. Brenner and Schmid (2015) defines the urban as a relational space and ask to look beyond binary

⁴ Thesis 1: the urban and urbanisation are theoretical categories, not empirical objects

Thesis 2: the urban is a process, not a universal form, settlement type or bounded unit.

Thesis 3: urbanisation involves three mutually constitutive moments— concentrated urbanisation, extended urbanisation and differential urbanisation

Thesis 4: the fabric of urbanisation is multidimensional

Thesis 5: urbanisation has become planetary

Thesis 6: urbanisation unfolds through variegated patterns and pathways of uneven spatial development

Thesis 7: the urban is a collective project in which the potentials generated through urbanisation are appropriated and contested.

From, Brenner, N. & Schmid, C., 2015. Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City*, 19(2–3), pp.151–182

categories of settlement-urban and rural. Their proposition demands merits for deconstructing the 'settlement fetishism' and to theorise urban by critiquing global political economy. However, a major drawback in their theorisation is the underestimation of differences. In the Indian context, distinctive welfare programs are designed separately for the urban and rural. A theory focusing on undifferentiated settlement boundaries fails to address the urban problems and underestimate the nuances of the urban outcomes. Here, privileging cityness and applying a global urban model to postcolonial cities is problematic (Schindler, 2017). Secondly, the universalisation of the global political economy also overlooks the contextual differences which shape urban practices in the postcolonial world. This thesis argues that in the postcolonial world, particularly in India, urban outcomes are never complete; rather, they are often incomplete and untranslatable in global vocabularies of urban knowledge. Watson (2016) calls the generalisation tendency in urban theorisation a "methodological error". She states "Methodological error is to generalise findings from unspecified and unlocated informants to the rest of the world, in other words the incorrect universalizing of theory based on research in just one region of the world" (Watson, 2016: 36). Finally, considering postcolonial urbanism as just a variegated form of global urbanism often gives a parochial narrative about the postcolonial cities. Robinson's (2006) argues for treating each city as an ordinary city. By doing so, she encourages us to dislocate from the conceptualisation of the urban beyond the gaze of 'modernity' (Robinson, 2006).

The universalisation of urban theorisation is heavily critiqued by the postcolonial urban scholars, which defines the urban as a discursive political field which is constructed by colonial power relations and hegemonic appropriation (Ong, 2011). This postcolonial understanding focuses on the subversive politics that shape the cities and also theorising cities from its contextual understanding of the geo-histories the urban (Benjamin, 2008; Roy, 2011b; Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti, 2013; Simone, 2013). Related to this subversive politics Roy (2009b) states, "counter-hegemony is often anticipated in the very structure of hegemony and that in turn such counter-politics often rehearses elements of hegemony" (Roy, 2009b:11). For dislocating the centre of urban knowledge production Sheppard et al. (2013) proposes 'provincializing global urbanism'. They state "Provincialization thus is a critical strategy whereby the "universal" is revealed to be no more than a place-

holder— necessary and inevitable at all times but entangled in concrete power struggles as rival claimants struggle over what should occupy this place” (Sheppard et al. 2013: 896). For them, differential scales of geo-histories shape the pattern of spatial negotiations for locals. This notion of contested politics operates through horizontally networked circuits of political solidarity and strategies. For Miraftab (2009), the operational fields of these contested politics are of two types: invited spaces and invented spaces. Invited spaces are those where the state and non-government organisations legitimise the politics of grassroots level. Whereas, invented spaces are collective actions by poor people which challenge the state and its distribution system and radicalises the politics through occupancy or adhocism (Miraftab, 2009). Miraftab (2009) also observes these politics never represents a linear pattern of binary divisions rather these are fluid and complicated and sometimes operates through a combination of both. The postcolonial theorisation often encounters criticism for an overemphasis on subaltern agents for a radical change. Schindler (2017) critiques postcolonial theorisation as an empty signifier and asks for looking beyond “a single cataclysmic event”. The postcolonial theorisation of the urban is also criticised for not considering how macro-economic forces shape urban outcomes. In this thesis, I follow a postcolonial theorisation of the urban and address the criticisms for more of a nuanced understanding of the postcolonial cities (in this case, Kolkata). This is discussed in detail in the next section (2.4.1). The postcolonial theorisation of the urban helps us to understand context specific urban outcomes and provides a framework for understanding of hegemonic power relations. This theorisation is also essential for this thesis as it critiques universalisation of urban outcomes and questions the normative model of development.

Focusing on ‘repeated instances’ distributed across varied cases and urban contexts through shared and interconnected networks, Robinson and Purnell’s (2012) idea of comparative urbanism also presents an appealing alternative framework (Parnell and Robinson, 2012). This theorisation compares urban outcomes that are generated from differential processes and geo-histories. It adopts methodological tactics of tracing, composing and launching. Tracing compares different connections, composing understands differential geo-histories of urban outcomes and finally launching re-conceptualises and theorises the urban outcomes based on cases. The thesis uses the framework of ‘comparative urbanism’ and compares variegated forms of urban

outcomes across three cases. It also uses the methodological tactics to conceptualise spatial adhocism.

Taking lessons from different theorisations, Karaman (2012) develops an ‘immanentist approach’ which relies heavily on a schizoanalytic approach and Althusser’s framework of the encounter (Karaman, 2012). Criticising the omnipresence of planetary urbanisation, he states “The encounters between these discrete parts—which have their own “regional structures”—exceed the event of the encounter, in the sense that they are not simple interactions between parts of a single determinate totality; rather, the interactions between the parts are contingent and generative of new connections between them” (Karaman, 2012:7).

The table below shows a comparative analysis of the theorisation of urban among different schools of thought.

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Urban Theorisations

School of Thought	Authors	Main Argument	Critique
Planetary urbanization	(Brenner and Schmid, 2011, 2013, 2015)	Metropolitan areas are polynucleated regions and extend beyond territorial formulations and constructs urbanity as a relational feature. Critique urbanisation as a from and establish it as a multiplicity of processes.	Theoretical abstraction of universalisation of urbanisation overlooks differential geo histories, nature of the state and variegated forms of capital circulation.
	(Merrifield, 2012, 2013)	Urban as a ‘space of encounter’ and universalises it through	Urbanisation, as a planetary phenomenon, undermines the nature of heterogeneity and hybridity of the postcolonial world.

		amplification, magnification and multiplication.	Planetary urbanisation also doesn't speak about the historically constructed power relations that shape postcolonial urbanism. By doing so, it fails to interpret the discursive politics that is operational in postcolonial urbanism.
Urban Assemblage	(McFarlane, 2009, 2011)	McFarlane's idea of 'assemblage' is based on 'socio-material transformation' through the interaction of human and non-human agents. McFarlane uses assemblage as an empirical tool for understanding socio-spatial inequalities. He offers cosmopolitanism as a normative political project. Theoretically, McFarlane's idea is influenced by Actor-Network theory of Bruno Latour, which has a tendency of 'levelling' different actors.	As a methodological tool, McFarlane's conception of assemblage is important as it provides retheorization of urban empirics. The absence of explicit analysis of political economy makes open-ended framework but provides important insights on everyday practices. The notion of power and hegemony, which circulates through the networks and also exists between actors is missing in McFarlane's analysis. This opens up limitless opportunities of

			misinterpretation and generalisation abstractions.
Subaltern / Provincial Urbanism/ Occupancy Urbanism	(Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti, 2013); (Roy, 2011b, 2014, 2016); (Benjamin, 2008)	This looks at postcolonial urbanism as an epistemic stance where 'context of context' is valued through analysis of subversive politics. This also includes variegated forms of capital circulation that exists in the context of the postcolony.	It is often criticized because of its ontological singularity. The importance of locality underestimates the structural forces of the political economy of spaces which subsequently failed to deliver a theoretical framework. Postcolonial urbanism sometimes offers more methodological tools than a framework of analysis.
Relational Comparison	(Hart, 2016)	Understanding of relational as a dialectical process. Focused on the geo-historical process as well as interconnectedness and mutually constitutive processes.	Gramscian analysis of hegemony helps to understand the networks of power. The framework of analysis seems underdeveloped.
Comparative Urbanism	(Simone, 2011, 2015); Parnell and	Focused on 'repeated instances' distributed across varied cases and urban contexts through	Important to identify the circulatory matrix that exists between cases. This offers new methods of analysis to

	Robinson, 2012	<p>shared and interconnected networks.</p> <p>Compare urban outcomes that are generated from differential processes and geo-histories.</p> <p>Methodological tactics are tracing: compare different connections</p> <p>Composing: understanding of differential geo histories of urban outcomes</p> <p>Launching: reconceptualizing and theorizing urban outcome based on cases</p>	<p>understand the postcolonial condition.</p>
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2.4.1 A Comparative Understanding of Postcolonial Urbanism

From the above discussion related to urban theorisation, three things can be highlighted. Firstly, a contextual understanding of the urban is needed, which encourages a multiplicity of urban practices and allows a comparative understanding of the urban outcomes. Hence, instead of a universalising approach, the theorisation process should focus on the particularities of the empirics emerging from varied geo-historical contexts. Secondly, the analysis of the political economy of the cities enables us to understand how differentiated patterns of neoliberalism and appropriated forms of capital shape the nature of the state and its relationship with the political society. Finally, an understanding of ‘lived urbanism’ is required through the study of practices to decentre urban knowledge production (Pieterse, 2011). Thus, for this thesis, I draw learning from each approach and follow what Wachsmuth (2014) calls the city as “category of practices”. Here, the urban is “rather than just a category of analysis, it is

also a category of practice that can precipitate its own emergence” (Jazeel, 2018b: 407). Following, Bhan’s (2019b) argument on “why do we theorise?” at the plenary lecture of “At the frontiers of the urban: thinking concepts and practices globally”, I argue in this thesis spatial adhocism gives that theoretical lens which amplifies certain categories and practices.

Taking learning from each of these theorisations, this thesis particularly focuses on three aspects to theorise the urban. Firstly, to minimise the limitless abstraction in the process of universalising urban theorisation, it focuses on particular instances and practices which are contextual to Kolkata and situates Kolkata as one of the many forms of ‘ordinary city’. It also compares urban outcomes following the method of ‘experiment comparisons’ (discussed in 3.2.2). Based on the empirics collected it categorises practices (discussed in chapter 5 and 6) but also claims these categories are unfinished and incomplete. This amplifies that indeterminacy is omnipresent in the postcolonial urbanism. Secondly, this thesis explores the heterogeneity of urban practices and relationships that shape the discursive field of the urban. Here, it uses the analogy of exposure proposed by Simone (2019). He states “Here, exposure means being attuned to events and circumstances beyond one’s normal routines and interests. So exposure is a multifaceted intersection of vulnerability and opportunity; it is a by-product of precarity but also a way of dealing with that precarity at the same time, and this doubleness of sense is embodied by the background” (Simone, 2019:3). It is already discussed earlier (ibid 2.1), heterogeneity is an important component of postcoloniality. By looking beyond binary narratives, this thesis allows an understanding of assemblages of various materiality, relations and power. Finally, by establishing spatial adhocism as a spatiotemporal framework, this thesis allows analysing practices both spatially and temporally.

It is discussed earlier (ibid 50-51), the urban acts as a field for discursive politics. At this juncture it is also important to understand the spatial politics that plays out by the political society to exert their rights in cities. To do so, the next section discusses how this thesis uses the concept of conflict politics to understand the political relationship between the postcolonial state and the political society.

2.5 What conflict politics?

To understand the relationship of subaltern subjects with the dominant discourse, which in this case is the postcolonial state, it is also important to unpack the binary entanglement of dominance and resistance. The orthodox understanding of resistance is always represented as an act against domination (Sharp *et al.*, 2000). Sharp *et al.* (2000) encourage us to look beyond this binary construction of domination and resistance. They argue resistance is the core subject of the state apparatus where resistance can also be looked at rather an extension of power than challenging it. Here power is constructed through social relations. It is the flow of social interactions which is mobilised through various networks (Allen, 2003, 2009). At this juncture, resistance becomes the diagnostic apparatus for identifying differential power relations (Pile, 1997). Similarly, subaltern groups are not always ready to tear through the hegemonic power through resistance. The acts are more contingent, repetitive and habitual (Haynes and Prakash, 1991). The word resistance originates from the Latin word '*resistere*' which can be translated as to make a stand against or oppose. The relationships between subaltern subjects and the postcolonial state are not always representative of resistance; rather, it contains bargaining, negotiations, patronage or even sometimes direct antagonism. This does not undermine the importance of resistance as a form of engagement but portrays resistance as one of the forms which can be achieved through the possibilities of rupture. The research defines these engagements as conflict politics which developed through networked mobilisation of power, the capacity of different actors and opens up possibilities for analysing the dynamic trajectories of emancipation and social change (Featherstone, 2008; Papaioannou, 2014). I borrow the idea of 'friction' to construct these engagements. For Tsing (2005) 'friction' is represented by unstable, heterogeneous, awkward encounters that are developed through interconnections across different power relations. She states "As a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (Tsing, 2005:5).

To understand and analyse these unstable, heterogenous engagements, everyday life becomes an essential ethnographic site which not only portrays the extraordinary encounters but also gives a scope to understand the ordinary acts by the subaltern

subjects. In “Chandra’s Death”, Guha (1997) shows us the textual details about the depositions made after a Bagdi woman’s death. Instead of highlighting big events or the extraordinary, Guha focuses on micro details of the narratives. He states “...historical scholarship has developed, through recursive practice, tradition that tends to ignore the small drama and fine detail of social existence, especially at its lower depths” (Guha, 1997: 36). This reiterates the importance of situating the focus on everyday site where extraordinary intersects with the ordinary acts. James Scott (1990) in his work on South-Asian peasants, calls these ordinary acts ‘hidden transcripts’. For him, ‘hidden transcripts’ are the zones of continuous struggles between the dominant and the subordinates. He states “Finally, the most explosive realm of politics is the rupture of the political cordon sanitaire between the hidden and the public transcript.....Much of our attention will be devoted to what I have chosen to call the infrapolitics of subordinate groups. By this, I mean to designate a wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance that dare not speak in their own name. A grasp of the substance of this infrapolitics, its disguises, its development, and its relationship to the public transcript, can help us clarify several vexed problems in political analysis” (Scott, 1990: 19). Scott (1990) appropriately shows how subtle acts by the peasants challenge the dominant discourse, and they challenge it from outside. However, Scott (1990) focuses only on rupture and clearly makes a distinction between the subordinate and the dominant as binary opposites. However, the practice of clientelism in the South Asian context shows that rupture is not the only outcome of conflict politics. Simultaneously, the subordinate and the dominant are not always polar opposites; rather, they are mutually constitutive of each other. State agendas are often shaped by ordinary struggles (Haynes and Prakash, 1991). Abu-Lughod (1990) warns us about romanticising resistance by taking examples of everyday acts, folklores of Bedouin women. Her provocation helps us to look beyond the polar opposite nature of domination and resistance and opens up possibilities to find innovative acts, artefacts and strategies to analyse various forms of conflict politics (Abu-Lughod, 1990).

2.6 Chapter Summary

The above discussion explores postcolonial conditions in three thematic areas—capital, state and the urban by critically engaging with the existing literature. The

discussion on conflict politics (2.5) also shows why the framework of dominance and resistance is not adequate in the context of postcolony. Each of the thematic areas show heterogeneity, indeterminacy, constituency and hybridity are inherent constituents of postcolonial conditions. Based on the above discussion, I identify major areas where this thesis can contribute. Firstly, this thesis analyses how global capital is appropriated in the context of Kolkata. This political economic analysis helps to understand various forms of urban margins in Kolkata and also identifies how state and political society relations are unique based on the forms of capital. By doing so, this thesis shows how various forms of postcolonial capital determine the nature of conflict politics. Secondly, I represent the Janus-faced identity of the postcolonial state, where dispossession and rehabilitation of the dispossessed happen simultaneously. This challenges the deterministic view of shirking capacity of the state in the age of global capitalism. This also helps to critique Chatterjee's (2011) conceptualisation of political society. By doing so, it explores the practices of the political society spatially and temporally. Thirdly, by mapping various adhoc practices of the state, it deconstructs the normative notion of the state and also challenges the idea of 'weak state'. It rather, establishes the idea of the state is more complex in the context of India where adhocness never represents weak institutional capacity but a subversive field of negotiations, dispossession, appropriation and partial rehabilitation. Fourthly, it discusses how political relationships between the state and political society is multiple and the boundary between them is indistinguishable. Simultaneously, by bringing state and its operations in the urban theorisation process, the thesis contributes to the dynamic field of postcolonial urbanism and opens up possibilities for an alternative process of theorisation. Finally, the thesis focuses on urban practices and shows how categories of practices are incomplete and multiple. Here multiplicity is opposed to diversity; rather, it indicates alterity for which a language is yet to develop (Jazeel, 2018a). This incompleteness one way shows the untranslatability and inadequacy of vocabularies to understand the differences that exist in the context of the postcolony. Here, these fragments for translation depicts the formation of new subjects and relations. Here I follow McFarlane's (2018) conceptualisation. He states "Understanding urbanism demands plural, even contradictory positions, including multiple conceptions of the urban and the city" (McFarlane, 2018:1010). Another way, the incompleteness also makes theorisation a dynamic and iterative process and

dislocate the theorisation process to elsewhere beyond the normative modernity. This dislocation also allows us to propose an alternative theorisation of urban knowledge.

This idea of dislocation is further explained in the next chapter in the relation to research philosophy and methodology that is adopted for the research. The next chapter also discusses the data collection methods and the process of analysis that are followed to support the research questions.

3 Research Philosophy and Methodology

*“Disciplines are by definition based on territorial epistemologies:
studying the borders doesn’t lead necessarily to border thinking . . .
unless scholars engage in epistemological disciplinary disobedience
and bring to the fore the existential experience of dwelling in the
border”*

*-Walter D Mignolo, Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality,
Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*

3.1 Research Philosophy

The previous chapter discusses postcolonial conditions in relation to capitalism, state and the urban. The chapter also put importance on the social production of spatial issues which are manifested into various practices. This thesis sees the urban as a set of practices where urban outcomes are relational and iterative and produced by various networks of power and actors. As this research proposes to dislocate theorisation from Western epistemology, the research philosophy looks beyond the subject-object dialectical entanglement. In Western epistemology (Marxist philosophy) human practices are conceptualised as an outcome of dialectical relationship with the world. By critiquing this binary formation, this thesis explores how the subject and object formation follows a relational approach. To do so, this chapter first explains the research philosophy that is adapted for the research. Then, it clarifies the ontological and epistemological positioning of this research. The second section discusses in detail the methodology that is adopted to conduct this research. It also explains why a critical ethnographic approach is taken to conduct this research. Then, it explains why a comparative approach is essential for the research. The third section maps various ethnographic methods that are adopted for the collection of empirics by explaining details of the field visits. The fourth section discusses the data analysis process that is followed in the research. The final section summarises the chapter discussions.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, the research focuses on a relational understanding of the subject-object formations. However, this relational understanding does not undermine the objectivity of the research, which is shaped by the research questions. Here, the analysis of social reproduction needs to be dynamic to accommodate emergent material practices (Harvey, 1990). Thus the analysis needs to be informed by the empirical domain, its generative mechanism and events and the intrinsic power relations which exist in the empirical domain (Roberts, 2001). As this research argues about a contextual understanding of practices, the abstraction of the empirics is only limited to 'rational abstraction' (Sayer, 1992; Cox, 2013). 'Rational abstraction' minimises the chances for limitless abstraction through generalisations. This iterative process of abstraction has two essential characteristics. Firstly, it represents social structures and their generative mechanisms. Secondly, this abstraction also allows us to unpack contingent power relations (Yeung, 1997). So,

the research philosophy acknowledges human actions are socially situated, and knowledge is constructed through relations (Sayer, 1997). Simultaneously, the research also acknowledges a realist analysis through the analysis of power, relations and structures. This realist theorisation looks into the contingent processes and discourses without their apparent appearance. To explain the research philosophy in detail, the next section discusses the ontological and epistemological position of this thesis.

3.1.1 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning

Ontology and epistemology are two important parts of research philosophy. Ontology generally means the 'theory of being' (Marsh and Furlong, 2002). This 'theory of being' helps us to interpret what constitutes reality. Whereas, epistemology means how the knowledge about reality is gathered. So, epistemology by its definition means a 'theory of knowledge' (Marsh and Furlong, 2002). By ontology, we mean how we perceive reality and by epistemology, we mean how to acquire knowledge about the reality. Here, the reality not only means the physical reality but various causal effects of reality. Though ontology and epistemology are two different concepts, they are interrelated. For the purpose of this research based on its research questions, the ontology represents the nature of the relationship that exists between the postcolonial state and people at the margins. Epistemologically this reality of the relationship is gathered through ethnographic methods for qualitative analysis. The research already identifies human actions as socially situated, and simultaneously, it identifies various causal effects of social structures that determine these practices. To explain these, this thesis discusses critical realism and social constructivism as ontological concepts and shows how this research situates itself within both of these by taking learning from each.

In a conversation with Ernesto Laclau, Roy Bhaskar (1998) mentions the world is "structured, differentiated, open, governed by laws which are transfactual, constituted by its own kind of contradictions and antagonisms, and without any reason, intelligibility or discursive practice" (Laclau and Bhaskar, 1998:11-12). This highlights that knowledge about the world is reflexive and dynamic. It is a result of the interaction between subjects and objects. Here, knowledge is also "fallible and incomplete" as direct access to deep structures that govern reality is almost impossible (Proctor, 1998). Ontologically, social constructivism focuses on human agency as a set of

discursive power relations and social events are shaped by the language of power (Gorski, 2013). This is criticised heavily by the realists because of the unbounded scope of abstraction that lies here. On the contrary, critical realism adopts 'empiricist abstraction' where knowledge is constructed through objective analysis of generative mechanism. According to critical realism, knowledge comprises a description of pre-defined social structures and power relations. Critical realists believe that social structures have two components- intersubjective (cultural) and material (artefacts). Here social is always an emergent reality, which is iterative and revises its own practices and agencies (Gorski, 2013). Critical realism separates the causal properties of an event from its contingent surroundings. One of the major criticisms lies in this separation method. Separating the structural processes from the locally specific processes undermines the dialectic nature that exists between these two processes (Cox, 1991, 2013; Roberts, 2001). Critical realism also argues that social structures are open systems without the major interplay of social events and outcomes.

This research examines how people at the urban margins are involved with the postcolonial state in various forms of relationships and exert their rights in the city of Kolkata. I define these political relationships between the postcolonial state and political society, which are spatially manifested as conflict politics. This research also maps the networks of power and actors for the operationalisation of conflict politics. Simultaneously the research also looks at how these relationships are spatially manifested in several adhoc arrangements both by the state and the people at the urban margins. Finally, it constructs a framework based on adhoc practices first to dislocate urban theorisation and finally to offer an alternative and iterative method for the theorisation of the postcolonial urban. To do so, a social constructivist approach positions the subaltern subjects within their specific histories of domination and resistance with the state. It states the hegemonic relations between the postcolonial state and the political society are socioeconomically constructed. It argues that various forms of capital are also appropriated the representation of social relations that is constructed through colonialism and global capitalism. Simultaneously, a critical realist perspective also enables deciphering how various networks of power operationalise conflict politics. A critical realist approach also helps to understand the contingent causal effect relationship between conflict politics and spatial adhocism. Here, I position this research in between a social constructivist and a critical realist approach,

which helps to understand how realities have various subjective meanings and how these meanings are entangled with networks of power and their causal effects. Here, urban knowledge is fallible, objective and iterative. By doing so, the research adopts an ‘empiricist abstraction’ of the reality-based on certain contextual practices.

To construct this ‘empiricist abstraction’, the next section discusses the methodology that is followed to gather knowledge about the reality of relationships between the state and the political society.

3.2 Methodology

To collect empirics for analysis of the research question and to underrated contingent forms of power in the social relations, this thesis follows an ethnographic method. Ethnography provides tools to unpack the complexities of the social and spatial world created by human actions (Herbert, 2000). The research analyses the entanglements of urban space and human actions (conflict politics). These entanglements can be well explored through a relational understanding of socio-spatial imageries and power relations and finally abstracts these imageries to understand the complex relationship that exists between the postcolonial state and people at margins. Ethnography as a method is well suited for this purpose. To explain the difference between general encounters with people and ethnography, Ingold (2014) focuses on the reflexive understanding that lies in ethnography for the construction of new knowledge. He states, “For what we could call “ethnographicness” is not intrinsic to the encounters themselves; it is rather a judgment that is cast upon them through a retrospective conversion of the learning, remembering and note-taking which they call forth into pretexts for something else altogether” (Ingold, 2014: 386). In his discussion of ethnography, Hammersley (2006) identifies a tension that exists between the “participant and analytic perspective”. He states ethnography tries to focus on the participant’s perspective to certain actions. Simultaneously, it also creates an analytical perspective on human actions and meanings (Hammersley, 2006). He also states that sometimes ethnography fails to construct a “systematic taxonomy” of meanings. The reasons for this absence are mainly twofold. Firstly, ethnography often focuses on spatiality than temporality. This often makes ethnography a territorial approach.

Secondly, temporally, often ethnography is ahistorical where individual life histories are often neglected. For Hart (2006), ethnography often fails to recognise the spatial metaphors which are historically and politically constructed and relational. Roy (2012) also evokes similar problems by stating 'ethnography of circulation' is more important than 'ethnography of location' to decipher spatial politics (Hammersley, 2006). By critiquing ethnography Holston (2008) shares a similar view. He describes "By critique I do not mean pronouncing what is right or wrong with the way things are, judging them by some external measure. Rather, I mean pointing out the way that thoughts and actions rest on taken-for-granted, unexamined assumptions and the consequences that both the unexamination of the familiar and its defamiliarization have for the construction of the way things are" (Holston, 2008: 34-35). Roy (2012) argues that defamiliarization is essential to construct a rhetoric of 'ethnography of circulation' which is more of an orientation shift beyond methodological shift (Roy, 2012). The 'ethnography of circulation' goes beyond the parochial idea of territorialities and sometimes connects the local with the global through networks of circulation (Raghuram, Henry and Bornat, 2010; Cochrane and Ward, 2012). 'Ethnography of circulation' is essential for the current research to map various networks of power which often extends beyond any particular territory. To overcome the limitations of traditional ethnography, this thesis adopts a critical ethnographic approach which is discussed in the next subsection.

3.2.1 Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography challenges the 'detached gaze' of ethnography and engages with the contingent forms of reality. It also helps to create relational categories in "particular conjuncture" by making subaltern strategies visible (Chari and Gidwani, 2005). Hart (2004) describes "the project of critical ethnography, as conceive it, is precisely one of 'advancing from the abstract to the concrete' in the sense of building concrete concepts that are adequate to the historical and geographical complexity with which they are seeking to grapple" (Hart, 2004:97). It offers different vantage points for understanding spatial metaphors and entanglement of power relations (Hart, 2006). Hart (2004) proposes two essential characteristics of critical ethnography. One is relational understanding through the dialectical relationships between the production of knowledge and history. The other being articulation. She states articulation as the

connection which is grounded in the inseparable conditions of meaning and practices (Hart, 2004). Articulation is dynamic as the conditions and processes are always in motion. Here, articulation has a lineage to 'ethnography of circulations'. For Goankar and Povinelli (2003), circulation is the enabling matrix where varied textual and topical social forms emerged and identifiable with their copresence through mobility and mutability (Gaonkar and Povinelli, 2003). Following their arguments, Roy (2012) asks us to create a circulatory matrix which provides the spaces of subjectification and enables performance by collective agency (Roy, 2012). For this research, critical ethnography serves three essential purposes. Firstly, beyond a territorial fixity of the empirics, this method allows us to compare and contrast various practices of conflict politics and spatial adhocism that are present in three case studies. Secondly, critical ethnography positions me in the field with a relational understanding of the subaltern subjects and acts as a signifier for subaltern voices. Finally, critical ethnography also helps to understand 'networked mobilisation' of power through which conflict politics get operationalised.

To follow critical ethnography as a method, this research adopts three strategies. Firstly, to identify the nature of circulations, the research in its analysis chapters (chapter 5 and 6) maps the networks of power for each case study within which conflict politics take place. It also identifies circulations through interconnected trajectories of adhocism that exists in three case studies. Secondly, it focuses on the experimental comparison method proposed by Lancione and McFarlane (2016). It deploys the method of relational comparisons by tracing the history and genealogy of conflict politics for each of the cases. The level of abstraction happens through mapping differential patterns of conflict politics and by developing typologies of conflict politics. Finally, the research adopts the method of transduction to categorise spatial adhocism in the analysis chapter (Chapter 6). For Lefebvre (2003), categorisation through transduction always constructs space as an incomplete subjectivity, which is a reflection of the future as well constructed through actions in time and space (Lefebvre, 2003). Transduction is important to construct spatial adhocism as it is always an iterative mechanism by constantly creating new possibilities. By rereferring to Mackenzie (2002, 2003) Kitchin and Dodge (2005) identify transduction as a kind of operation which is formulated through 'ontogenetic modulation' (Kitchin and Dodge, 2005). This 'ontogenetic modulation' helps to decipher the dynamicity that exists in

spatial relations and outcomes. Transduction as a method involves continuous feedbacks from the conceptual framework and empirical observation and works through it to construct a theoretical object with performance and copresence of different objects (Kitchin and Dodge, 2005; Schmid *et al.*, 2018). In this research, spatial adhocism is constructed through assemblages of heterogeneous elements. It continuously constructs categories, and simultaneously deconstruct those categories through a process of defamiliarization but never get disconnected from the grounded knowledge (discussed in detail in chapter 6).

The research focuses on three case studies and based on the empirics compares practices of conflict politics and spatial adhocism. For the purpose of comparison, this thesis follows the method of experimental comparison, which is discussed in the next subsection.

3.2.2 Experimental Comparison

Comparative studies have a long history which was also often criticised on the basis of abstraction. The renewal of comparative studies in urban theorisation got its momentum after the publication of Jennifer Robinson's book 'Ordinary Cities'. As a critique of modernity and western theorisation process, Robinson (2006) encourages us to look beyond the hierarchy of cities and proposes to initiate a theorisation process by considering every city as ordinary. Subsequent years have observed this 'comparative turn' in urban theorisation with publications of several studies. Among them, it is worth mentioning Interventions in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (2016, Vol. 40. Issue 1) contributed by several urban scholars and few articles in Progress in Human Geography (Vol. 36. Issue 2); (Vol. 40, Issue 1); (Vol. 40 Issue 2). This clearly shows the return of comparativism in urban studies and evokes the understanding of cities through the lens of particularities and ordinariness. "Uniqueness and particularity are back (again) and finding exceptions to as well as taking exception to general urban-theoretical rules have become significant currents in the literature" (Peck, 2015:1). Peck (2015) sees this as the democratisation of urban theory through a plurality of voices but also warns us about the ontological singularity and underestimation of macro-economic forces.

Comparisons are usually conducted to discover the empirical relationship among variables (Lijphart, 1971). Tilly (1984) describes comparison as a process to form categories of the same variables. He also identifies two dimensions of comparison, namely 'share of all instances' and 'multiplicity of forms'. Based on Tilly's (1984) categorisation, Nijman (2007) further explains 'individualising comparison' and terms it as 'multiple individualising comparison'. In 'multiple individualising comparison' primary focus is usually given on a specific case and attempts to reach a deeper understanding by comparing it other cases (Nijman, 2007). As he states, this is not only 'descriptive idiographic' rather; it focuses on 'deep analogies' and uniqueness. The deep analogies are developed through particularities that are separated by space and time. Particularities are essential as they are often constructed by geographical scales which is a reflection of social relations (Ward, 2008). Similar to this notion Pickvance (2001) proposes the idea of case-oriented strategy. Citing Ragin (1987), he highlights the importance of case-oriented strategy as it can appreciate complexity, unravels historical conditions that produce different historical outcomes (Pickvance, 2001).

McFarlane (2010) focuses on practices rather than forms and positions comparisons as a political act for creating urban knowledge. He argues one-way comparativism as a strategy reveals assumptions, limitations and particularities of theoretical and empirical claims. Another way, it is also a continuous process of defamiliarization (McFarlane, 2010). Here defamiliarization helps to unsettle the static theorisation and limitless abstraction and also acts as an apparatus to unpack the 'familiar strange' (Holston, 2008; Ward, 2010; Roy, 2012). Comparison serves the purpose of 'double agents' which in explicit mode creates new methodology and typologies and in implicit mode creates urban knowledge by unsettling the gaze of abstract theorisation. McFarlane (2010) states this as a discursive field of study. He states "This form of learning is uncertain not just because of its modesty and provisionality, however, but because in widening the discursive field the occurrence of unlikely translations can lead to the increased traversing of unfamiliar and unpredictable terrain" (McFarlane, 2010: 734).

Based on Pickvance's (1986) categorisation Robinson (2011) identifies four strategies for comparative studies viz. individualising, variation finding, universalising and

encompassing. The individualising strategy seeks to analyse different outcomes of a case and compares that with other cases. Variation findings explain systematic differences among broadly similar contexts. The universalising strategy attempts to look for similarities or differences which are further developed for theoretical abstractions. Finally, encompassing looks at each case as a reflection of different but intertwined processes. Citing McMichael (1990), she further explains 'incorporating comparisons', which sees every instance is constituted through differential historical contexts. It analyses the macro processes for certain outcomes and looks for particularities in every instance (Robinson, 2011).

The research particularly focuses on this fourth category of classification and analyses different forms of spatial adhocism and conflict politics that operate among three case studies. This method is helpful for the research because three case studies represent different forms of politics. These different forms of politics are labour politics, squatter eviction politics and land acquisition politics. Each of these politics is different for three reasons. Firstly, each of the case studies represents three different forms of postcolonial capitalism and subsequent stories of dispossession. Secondly, for each of these cases, the state's role and operationalisation of its apparatuses are different. In the case of labour politics, the state is apparently invisible but latently supports the domination and hegemonic appropriation of power by the mill authority. Whereas in squatter eviction politics, the state visibly deploys its domination and violence. In the case of land acquisition politics, the state often makes its presence visible but also because of the intensity of the movement it retrogrades its position. Finally, encompassing also allows this research to analyse these three politics together keeping into consideration their particularity and shows how collectively these politics contribute to the urban outcomes.

Here comparison becomes "means to examine more than one event, object, outcome or process with a view to discovering the similarities and/or differences between them" (Ward, 2010: 473). Hence the research adopts the framework of experimental comparison, which enables to compare the empirics more from their differences, not similarities and also helps to identify interrelations between various apparently different parameters. As Lancione and McFarlane (2016) write this comparison is experimental because firstly, it compares different instances that are generated from

different contexts. Secondly, it focuses on everyday embodied practices of those instances and thirdly, it looks into the 'differential patterns' and 'interconnected trajectories' between case studies (Lancione and McFarlane, 2016). By adopting the framework of experimental comparison, the research seeks to identify the particularities of conflict politics and spatial adhocism that exist in three case studies. However, it also does not underestimate how political economic forces are enacted in these particularities. To avoid the underestimation of political economic forces, the research analyses the neoliberal trajectories of global capitalism and identifies how capital circulation negotiate, reproduce and find new pathways of accumulation in postcolonial cities.

To do so, the research carried out ethnographic fieldwork in three stages. The details of this three-stage fieldwork and data collection techniques are explained in the next section.

3.3 Techniques for Data Collection

The research deconstructs urban knowledge formation by dislocating the theory-building process. Here, the dislocation involves theorisation from urban practices, proposing incompleteness as a theoretical category and by encouraging a context-specific understanding of the urban outcomes. My approach for the dislocation of the theory-building process is followed throughout the fieldwork process, data collection and analysis. This was done consciously for two reasons. Firstly, I perceive the starting point of critique for a dislocation initiates with the methods that are adopted to collect data as these empirics would be further developed into theory. Secondly, the dislocation invites the possibilities of deconstructing normativity by making knowledge generation as an open-ended phenomenon. To conduct this research, numerous iterations are followed in relation to research questions, selection of case studies and data collection methods. These iterations do not portray a lack of robustness; rather, it indicates how incompleteness becomes an essential element to conduct field research in the context of postcolony. These iterative processes are discussed in detail in the next subsection with the details of the field visits.

3.3.1 Field Visits Details

For this research, a three-stage field visit is conducted. The first stage of fieldwork was conducted from December 2016 to January 2017 to do a pilot survey and to identify the case studies for the research. The PhD proposal indicated slum areas of Mumbai and Kolkata as potential field sites. So, the first stage of fieldwork includes both the cities for reconnaissance survey. The Mumbai visit includes a discussion with academics based at Tata Institute of Social Sciences and interview of the late president of Slum Dwellers Slum International. However, after discussion with the supervision team, Mumbai was dropped as a field site as Mumbai slums are over-researched in urban studies. Initially, for Kolkata, Tolly *nullah* (canal) eviction (eviction happened in 2001-02) was decided as the case study. The first stage field visit in Kolkata initially involved discussions with Kolkata based academics and the leadership of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Liberation (CPIML) who were actively part of the anti-eviction movement of Tolly *nullah*. Through my own political network in Kolkata, key persons were identified for the jute mill. The discussions with the grassroots political actors for Loomtex jute mill and newspaper reporting during the same time revealed the ongoing movement of Bhangar (anti-power grid). A reconnaissance survey in the Loomtex mill area was conducted, and gatekeepers were identified. Based on newspaper reports and informal discussions with the grassroots political workers of Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Red Star (CPIML Red Star) Bhangar was also selected as one of the case studies. However, due to the volatile and violent nature of Bhangar movement, a reconnaissance survey of Bhangar was not conducted. This pilot fieldwork was helpful to test the preliminary research questions that were developed during the preparation of the PhD proposal. The pilot fieldwork was also helpful to familiarise me with the cases and to limit the risks for fieldwork.

The second stage of fieldwork was conducted from October 2017-March 2018. The case studies selected for the research were Loomtex Mill, Tolly *nullah* eviction and Bhangar movement. However, within the first few days of fieldwork, the Salt Lake eviction started because of the ongoing Under-17 FIFA World Cup. At this point, after discussion with the supervision team, Salt Lake was included by dropping Tolly *nullah* as Salt Lake, that time was an ongoing struggle rather than a historical one.

Refinement of the research questions was done after conducting three interviews in each case study. Auto-photography was eliminated as a data collection technique. In each of the case study, the political situation was volatile, and the respondents were busy with participating in rallies, strategising methods for conflict politics because of which adequate time was not permitted to train the respondents for the auto-photography purpose. My own photography and photography by a professional photographer and educator were only used for the purpose of data collection. Ethical approval was already obtained for the use of photographic materials before the fieldwork. The ethical approval form is included in the appendix. Further details of the fieldwork, data collection methods, sampling technique and respondent composition, are going to be discussed in detail in the next section.

Final data validation fieldwork was conducted from November 2018- January 2019. The main purpose of this fieldwork was to incorporate the changed political situation in case study 3 and also sharing of initial findings with the political leaders.

Table 2 Stages of Fieldwork

Stage	Time Period	Objectives	Activities
Stage 1	December 2016- January 2017	Pilot fieldwork	Identification of case studies and gatekeepers, selection of data collection, preparation of research questions
Stage 2	October 2017- March 2018	Fieldwork	Finalisation of research questions, replacing one case study, refinement of data collection techniques, conducting participant observation and semi-structured interviews and photography, collection of secondary materials

Stage 3	November 2018- January 2019	Data Validation fieldwork	Sharing initial findings with political leaders, collection of secondary materials and two semi-structured interviews to capture changed political situation in case study 3
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The details of the field visit highlight how the research is conducted through various iterations in terms of research questions and case study selection. Similarly, an iterative process is also followed for techniques of data collection. The choice of techniques is an iterative process which is selected with continuous engagement with the literature and also in accordance with the research questions. The research uses four techniques for data collection. These are participant observation and semi-structured interviews; oral histories; visual methods and content analysis. The next section discusses each of the data collection technique in detail.

3.3.2 Participant Observation and Semi-structured interviews

Participant observation is a key data collection technique for this critical ethnographic study. Shah (2017) states two important characteristics of participant observation. Firstly, it critically examines assumptions and theories. Secondly, it helps to understand the interrelationship of practices, histories and ideologies (Shah, 2017). She also argues being in the field in action also unsettles normative understandings and generates new knowledge. Participant observation also enables spatiotemporal subjectivities of social production and consumption (Watson and Till, 2010). Observing and writing field notes help to document 'everyday geographies', fluid spaces and practices. Although there is a possibility of imposed positionality associated with participant observation, it does not limit the scope rather fundamentally shifts the way researcher aims to locate himself/herself within local practices (Kusenbach, 2003). Shah (2017) describes participant observation entails a dialectical relationship between intimacy and estrangement. By citing Hastrup (2004), she states it is a

deliberate detachment from the community the researcher is positioned as well creates a position of 'strange familiarity' (Shah, 2017).

For this research, participant observation includes participation in community gatherings (for case study 1,2, 3), rallies (for case study 2, 3) and political meetings (for case study 2, 3) and informal interaction with the community in all three cases. This helped me to be an active participant in their conflict politics and observant of how they engage with the police and other state apparatus and mobilisation mechanisms. My informal engagement being a participant observant includes attending Laksman's family gathering (case study 1), frequent dinner with Rajesh and his family (case study 2) and frequent lunch sessions with political leaders and grassroots activist (case study 3). This informal engagement serves two purposes. Firstly, at the initial stage of my fieldwork, it facilitates mutual familiarising myself with the setting and my respondents. This was also a trust-building exercise by involving self with everyday experiences of my respondents. Secondly, at the later stage of my fieldwork, this engagement helped me to decipher the intertextuality that is associated with everyday experiences where conflict politics is an integral part of it. However, in case study 1, the local tyrant initially became sceptical because of my frequent interactions with Laksman. At the very beginning of our conversation (me and local tyrant), I was often labelled as a sympathiser of CPIML Red Star. However, after multiple explanations about my positionality being a researcher, the situation eased partially. These highlight the strengths and limitations of participant observation. My conscious efforts not to be directly involved throughout the fieldwork helps to overcome some of its limitations. I have also consciously acknowledged the privileges of my social class and restricted myself to consider as a part of the community. Hence, my role is only limited as a researcher to amplify subaltern voices but not to produce knowledge collaboratively with the community through participatory methods. I consider this also as a part of the dislocation strategy, which acknowledges differences and unequal power relations with all its limitations and tries to critique these inequalities through a process of self-reflection.



Figure 1 Participant Observation

Top Left: Political Meeting (Case 3); Top Right: Rally (Case 2)

Bottom Centre: Community Gathering (Case 2)

Semi-structured interviews are those which have some pre-determined questions and modify those questions as per the respondent's perception. This helps to decipher the embodied everyday experiences of the respondents and makes the interview as an iterative process. The semi-structured interviews also do not allow the interview to deviate completely from the central theme (Rabionet, 2011). The interviewer often uses props like maps, photographs to instigate the interviewee's mind. Although props are often helpful for continuation purposes, it sometimes alters the reflection of the interviewee (Kusenbach, 2003).

In this research, a total of 37 individual and group interviews (each of four to seven people) were conducted. Each interview duration ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. Key themes discussed in the semi-structured interviews included

involvement in conflict politics, identification of rights in the city, selection of strategies for conflict politics, spatial adjustments and perspective about the state. Each interview followed the discussion on these thematic areas. However, each interview was unique in the ways each respondent reflected on these thematic areas building on their life histories and everyday encounters. The interviews and group discussions were always conducted in the community spaces for personal and respondent's safety issues. In the context of the current research, semi-structured interviews also helped in snowball sampling (discussed in detail in 3.3.6). The composition of the interview respondents is given below in the table. All names used in the thesis are fictitious, where the identity of the respondents was anonymised.

Table 3 Semi-Structured Interview Details

Case	Respondent Composition	No. of Interviews Conducted
Case 1	Political party leaders; Trade union leaders; Local tyrant; Worker's group, Community mobilisers	Six individual interviews and two group interviews with workers (all male)
Case 2	Non-evicted dweller and community leader; Evicted and rehabilitated dweller; Non-evicted dweller; Local councillor; Group meeting with Mayor of the municipal corporation; Elite group activist	10 individual interviews, One community meeting with Mayor and Three community meetings (Three female respondents including the local councillor, rest all are male)

Case 3	Political leaders; Local tyrants; Protesters; Officer-in - charge (O.C.) of the local police station; Rural local body representatives; Land broker	12 individual interviews, Three group meetings (One female who is the political leader of CPIML Red Star)
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The detailed questionnaires for the semi-structured interviews are attached in the annexe.

3.3.3 Oral Histories

Oral history is an important part of this research. It reflects an interconnectedness of personal memory, public events and lived imageries. Oral history is also a reflection of entanglements of language, meaning and power (Thomson, 2007). Oral history is often represented as stories which make certain hidden meanings legible and reflects urban reality through narratives (Sandercock, 2003). Stories often situate the researcher in a 'force field' where interplays of power are understood by misinformation and deception. As stories often represent an inverted reality Sandercock (2003) identifies five key principles for a 'good story': a) presence of sequential or temporal events b) element of coherence c) interrelations between universal and local d) structured framework of storyline with presence of protagonist e) moral tension (Sandercock 2003).

In this research, oral history is used to understand how individual life history shapes their involvement in conflict politics. The use of oral history also helps to amplify subaltern voices which are important for this thesis. Importance on oral history is also essential for dislocation of urban knowledge. Without imposing a perceived knowledge on the respondents, the representation of stories from the respondents helps for this dislocation. The archive of oral histories is presented through five individual stories of migration and eviction history for case study 2 (discussed in detail in chapter 4). The analysis also showcases how each of the stories from five respondents shapes their involvement in conflict politics.

3.3.4 Visual Methods

Visual methods are useful tools which help to document spatial imageries and memories. Citing Rogoff (2000), Crang (2003) states geographies of vision challenge the despatialised and disembodied view of the world and helps to unpack spatial fantasies, desire and dislocations (Crang, 2003). Sometimes this can also be deceptive which superimposes ornamented imageries over spatial realities. By quoting Puwar (2009), Rose (2014) mentions this as 'fetishization of visual methods' (Rose, 2014). She also argues visibility is becoming prominent over visuality which put more focus on representations and undermines practices. This fails to understand everyday politics and its spatial implications. This process of visibility over visuality is problematic because it lacks engagement with the participant. Conventional photography measure often becomes a reductionist approach, as images are not produced with the involvement of everyday life experiences (Markwell, 2000). The technocratic power that photographic tools assign to the researcher creates unequal power relations between the researcher and participant (Crang, 2010; Hunt, 2014).

To avoid voyeuristic interpretation of spatiality, the research only uses visual method as a method of triangulation. Here, photography only acts as supplementary material to support claims, not a major tool for analysis. Photographs are used to show spatial transformations and spatial enactment of conflict politics.

3.3.5 Content Analysis of Documents

Secondary data is collected through newspaper reports, policy documents and poster/pamphlets. The research undertakes content analysis of the documents for two purposes. Firstly, it helps to decipher different discourses around conflict politics and the changing rhetoric of conflict politics. Secondly, it also helps to triangulate various claims both by the postcolonial states and people at the margins. The table below explains the purpose of different documents that are collected during the fieldwork (details are provided in the appendix).

Table 4 Secondary Data Materials

Document Type	Source	Reasons for review
Policy documents	Various government agencies- Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation, Department of Land and Revenue, Govt. of West Bengal.	To understand various claims by the postcolonial state and disjuncture of implementation
Pamphlets and posters	Political parties-CPIML Red Star, Members of mobilisation groups- <i>Jomi Jibika Bastutantra</i> <i>O Poribesh Rakkha Committee</i> ; Citizen's Forum Salt Lake, Sangrami Majdoor Union.	To identify the disjuncture between different discourses
Newspaper reports	Different media houses, online sources	To decipher the popular narrative

The research adopts an inductive and iterative process for the selection of the respondents. Firstly, it helps to partially shift the power imbalance between the researcher and the respondents by incorporating the voice of respondents. Secondly, the iterative process also makes the semi-structured interview as a dynamic and open-ended process to accommodate changes. The following section briefly discusses the sampling method that is followed for conducting the research.

3.3.6 Sampling Method

The case studies are taken to evaluate local practices in three different ways: type of involvement in resistance movements, network and actors of resistance and spatial implication of conflict politics. Each case study has a varied sample size. The sample size is defined by the identification of key actors for each of the case studies and includes both members of the state apparatus and the political society. Preliminary identification of respondents was completed during the pilot study in consultation with

the gatekeepers, grassroots political workers and political leaders. Further, respondents were selected through snowball sampling during the fieldwork. Snowball sampling is particularly relevant for this research as this deciphers the networks of power that exists and also to analyse the circulatory nature of ethnography. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) criticise snowball sampling on following points: i) finding respondents and initiation of referral process ii) verification of the eligibility of respondents iii) controlling the type of chain and the no iv) monitoring of referral process (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). To delimit the criticism of snowball sampling, the research adopts certain strategies. Firstly, identification of respondents and initiation of the referral process is already completed in the pilot field study by identifying gatekeepers for each of the cases. For the verification and monitoring purpose, the field visit validated the claims through different networks which hold diametrically opposite views. Secondly, the type of chain and the number of respondents are dependent on the main research question and subsequent sub-questions that are developed for each of the case studies. Finally, respondents are also selected by identifying their involvement in conflict politics through participant observation. Any individuals under 18 years or physically unwell are excluded from participation for ethical purposes.

3.3.7 Recruitment Process

The primary recruitment of the respondents is based on their involvement in conflict politics. From my pilot study, I have already identified gatekeepers in each of the case studies. The gatekeepers are predominantly grassroots political workers who are/were associated with community mobilisations. At the initial stage of my fieldwork, I further attempted to strengthen my ties with the community through participant observation as discussed above (ibid 3.3.2). As the research adopts snowball sampling method, the recruitment process is also dependent on the referral process. Government officials are contacted through email or telephone.

The collected data through this technique are analysed by using NVivo software. The details of the process for data analysis is discussed in the following section.

3.4 Methods of Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is carried out with the help of relevant software such as NVivo. This has helped to code empirics which exist in the form of field notes, transcription of interviews and content analysis. The names of the interview respondents are anonymised, and only coded references are used for analysis. Through the triangulation of different research methods, the research aims to minimise the risk of abstraction in any specific research methods.

The analysis is carried out in three stages: a) the first stage of data analysis completed after the pilot study, b) the second stage attempts to decipher specific patterns emerging from the empirics. This is followed by c) third field visit for the validation of patterns. The third stage focuses on iterations some of the patterns specific to case study 3 after the validation of initial outcomes. For the first stage of analysis, I followed a narrative analysis, which helped me to interpret and understand different layers of meaning in the interview (Wiles *et al.*, 2005). The attention was paid to the embedded meaning related to the type of resistance and associated mechanisms.

The second stage of the data analysis is carried out in two ways: thematic network analysis and critical discourse analysis. Thematic network analysis illustrates and summarises the emerging themes from the interviews (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Attride-Stirling (2001) identifies three thematic categories. These categories are a) lowest order similar narratives or basic themes; b) grouping of similar basic themes for the construction of abstract principles or organising themes and c) super-ordinate themes which hold the main narrative or global themes. Preliminary analysis from the pilot field represents three major themes that are emerging from the narratives. a) Basic themes: uneven geographies; rights claims; b) Organising theme: networks and actors of resistance; c) Global theme: typologies of conflict politics and spatial adhocism and networks and actors. Finally, after the fieldwork period through coding major themes are identified by aligning it with the research questions. As the research focuses on a comparative approach (ibid 3.2.2), the analysis also takes into account the comparative aspects of the empirics. Here, either repeated instances of different practices or different manifestations of similar practices make the basis for comparison. The analysis compares the empirics on three broad themes type of

conflict politics, networks of power and spatial adhocism. Then the next level of comparison takes into account conflict politics and spatial adhocism by the state and by the political society across three case studies. With the help of this comparative analysis, finally, the thesis develops typologies of conflict politics and spatial adhocism. Typologies of conflict politics include differential patterns of state-political society relationships. Whereas, typologies of spatial adhocism exhibits the interconnected trajectories of spatial manifestations of these differential patterns.

The following table identifies themes that are coded through NVivo software for each case studies.

Table 5 Data Analysis Themes

Case Studies	Themes	Sub-themes
Case Study 1	Typologies of adhocism	Adhocism from top, adhocism from below, adhocism at the intersection
	Typologies of conflict politics	Fetishisation of law, Ordinary Spaces of negotiations, Mobilisation and outreach, Direct antagonism
	Counter-conflict politics strategies	Shop-floor politics, Fetishisation of law, Counter from inside,
	Conflict politics as sequential	N.A.
	Chronology of events	Events at Loomtex, Events in other mills
	Labour history and demography	Migration history, Labour issues
	Curious cases of patronage	Network for patronage, electoral violence

	Relationship between slum and mill politics	N.A.
	Innovative practices	N.A.
	Power, networks and actors	Actors, Strategies
	Outcomes of conflict politics	N.A.
Case Study 2	Typologies of adhocism	Adhocism from top, adhocism from below, adhocism at the intersection
	Typologies of conflict politics	Ordinary spaces of negotiations, Occupancy and strange case of clientelism, Quiet spaces of encroachment, Mobilisation through political power
	Displacement and eviction history	N.A.
	Circulation of spatial knowledge	N.A.
	Elite resistance	N.A.
	Chronology of events	N.A.
	Outcomes of conflict politics	N.A.
	Power, networks and actors	Actors, Strategies
Case Study 3	Typologies of adhocism	Adhocism from top, adhocism from below, adhocism at the intersection
	Typologies of conflict politics	Politics of autonomy, Formal transactional, Participation in electoral politics, Creation of vocabularies

	Chronology of events	N.A.
	Outcomes of conflict politics	N.A.
	Power, networks and actors	Actors, Strategies
	Review of land acquisition policies	N.A.
	Stages of conflict politics	N.A.
	Response from the state	Discipline and domination, Utilising administrative institutions, Negotiations

The above-mentioned themes and subthemes are analysed based on the responses from the respondents.

The content analysis follows the methods of critical discourse analysis to understand the underlying power narratives that exist in each of the cases. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) considers discourses as “socially constructed and conditioned”. Often it is also argued that CDA aims to make power objects more “visible and transparent” (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000). Citing Fairclough (1992), Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) identifies three dominant categories of CDA: a) discourses as texts b) discourses as discursive practices and c) discourse as social practices. Lees (2004) also states that “discourses are not simply reflections or (mis)representations of 'reality'; rather they create their own 'regimes of truth' - the acceptable formulation of problems and "solution, to those problems” (Lees, 2004:102-103). Collected secondary materials are analysed through three categories of discourse analysis.

The above discussion details out the approach that is followed for the data analysis. The final section summarises the arguments of the chapter.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter does three things. Firstly, the chapter explains the research philosophy that is followed to conduct this research. By borrowing from critical realism and social constructivism, this thesis ontologically rejects both the claims either truth is singular and universal or multiple and relative. Instead, it claims truth is stratified where meta layers of those stratifications are constructed by various networks of social relations. By doing so, it not only reduces limitless abstraction but also allows a theory development process through the interpretation of meanings and subtexts. It also makes theory-building an iterative and dynamic process. It argues each layer of the stratified truth is constructed by causal effects of social relations. As one of the central questions, this thesis explores the relationships between the postcolonial state and the political society. It challenges the universal truth of this relationship which is dominance and subordination. The methods allow me to understand these relationships are heterogenous where contingent forms of hegemonic relation of dominance and subordination are present along with other factors. This thesis also explains the spatial manifestations of these relationships are socially constructed through the capital, human actions and networks of power.

Secondly, this thesis relies on ethnographic methods for the theorisation of urban outcomes. However, it adopts a critical ethnographic approach which deconstructs territorial fixity of ethnography and allows to study the circulation of capital, power infrastructure of resistance and urban outcomes that exist in three case studies. Along with this, the thesis also focuses on the comparative understanding of urban outcomes that are generated from three case studies.

Finally, this research adopts certain approaches to dislocate knowledge production which include continuous iterations (research questions, data collection methods and selection of case studies), acknowledgement of differences of power (between the researcher and the respondents) and analysis of practices rather than any pre-determined categories. By doing so, this research first dislocates the theorisation process and then creates a space for theory building which is incomplete and iterative. To understand the nuances of this dislocation, the next chapter situates the research in the field of Kolkata.

4 Situating the Research in the Field

“How do you lose a word? Does it vanish into your memory, like an old toy in a cupboard, and lie hidden in the cobwebs and dust, waiting to be cleaned out or rediscovered?”

-Amitava Ghosh, The Hungry Tide

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter details the ontological positioning of the research and the methodology that is adapted to conduct the research. The chapter elucidates instead of taking a subject-object dialectics; this research focuses more on relational construction of subject-object. One way, this reduces treating subaltern subjects as points of data gathering. Another way, it also constructs the field as a site of dynamic power relations. To understand the nuances of these two propositions, this chapter first discusses how 'self' is constructed in the fieldwork and a reflection of my own discomfort, uncertainty, and negotiations. After situating 'self' within the field, this chapter then provides the details of the field site. The field site details are provided following a deductive approach i.e. from federal Indian state to Kolkata and finally, with the details of each case studies. It does so, by first discussing the nature of the postcolonial state that exists in my fieldwork. With a brief description of Indian federal structure, it explains how various structures of the state interact in the everyday urban of Kolkata. The next section discusses first discusses why Kolkata is selected for this research and then it explains the state that exists in Kolkata by explaining Kolkata's political and urban history. To understand the nature of the everyday state, section 4.5 situates the state at the urban margins. First, it critically engages with the literature related to urban margins and then explains the approach that is used to delineate the urban margins for this research. Section 4.6 gives the details of each of the three case studies by explaining the nature of capital and geo-histories that exist in each of the cases. The final section summarises the arguments of the chapter.

4.2 “Here, there, everywhere and in-between”- Construction of Self in the Field

In April 2019, while having my daily conversation with my mother over the telephone, she said that she had received a call on my Indian cell phone and a Hindi-speaking person was asking for me. When I asked her, who was looking for me, she said she couldn't understand entirely with her minimal understanding of Hindi, but she managed to get his name-Laksman. Laksman is my 'gatekeeper' for the Loomtex mill field site and a respondent too. I wondered if some major event had happened in the mill which Laksman wanted to convey to me. It was already very late at night in India, so I decided

to call him the next morning. When I called Laksman, he said he just wanted to know how I am doing now and to know my apparently 'mundane' daily details. After this brief telephonic conversation, I felt a little disappointed as the call was not related to any major event at Loomtex, which could be helpful for my research. However, after learning from this experience, now I sometimes communicate with Laksman on WhatsApp to share our 'lived' experiences.

Here, my disappointment problematises two critical questions in ethnography. Firstly, the field is not the site with geolocations, where we conduct our ethnography, rather the field is dynamic and relational, which cuts across time and space (Hyndman, 2001). Three months after the completion of my fieldwork Laksman's call to inquire about my wellbeing shows the field exists beyond the duration of my fieldwork and irrespective of my location. Secondly, my initial disappointment regarding lack of events also shows how my fieldwork has unknowingly become a part of 'theoretical tourism' for me for my 'critical vacation'. Here, margins are always sites for data which Hyndman (2001) calls as a 'new poetics of the exotics'. In this 'new poetics of exotics, we clearly fail to recognise the other (here Laksman) which exists within us (Katz, 1992). Here, the politics of representation in the field becomes essential to acknowledge and question the construction of self through recognition. Citing Katz (2004), Watson and Till (2010) ask for developing a 'countertopography' to deconstruct and interrogate the relationship between the self and others (Watson and Till, 2010). 'Countertopography' enables us to make visible the apparently 'hidden' power-laden socio-spatial relations through interrogation and deconstruction- a space of betweenness (Katz, 1992). Regarding countertopography Katz (2011) states "With countertopography I wanted to produce a geographical imagination for a more associative politics — one that was scale and place crossing with practical entailments that could work across and against received distinctions of 'us' and 'them'" (Katz, 2011:58).

Countertopography allows us to deconstruct the idea of the 'field'. The field is that dynamic subjectivity which is continuously undergoing transformations and the researcher needs to manoeuvre it accordingly by interrogating self. The interrogation of self happens through "self-critical sympathetic introspection and conscious analytical scrutiny" (England, 1994:82). England (1994) also argues for fieldwork as

'dialogic'. Firstly, it increases the possibility of the inputs for the subjects that are being researched. Secondly, through its dialogic nature researcher becomes more visible and never gets disconnected from the setting. It also allows the researcher to be an interlocutor and learning through their own bodily presence. Instead of an "objectifying, detached gaze" it is an antithetical pole for sharing, engagement and lived experiences (Crang, 2003).

My entanglement with my field and my respondents represents a self-critical reflexive position as well it also includes politics of sharing and care. In my initial visit during the first phase of fieldwork, one of the workers in Loomtex mill asked me "*what is there for us*"? This question made me uncomfortable, and I avoided my response. My initial avoidance of this question signifies two things. Firstly, it made me more aware of my privileges of being a middle-class Hindu male and difference of positionality between my respondents and me. Secondly, it also challenges the idea of a traditional interview method where respondents also shift their positions by asking questions. This question and my avoidance to answer it haunted me throughout my PhD journey. However, to overcome these, I adopted two strategies during my second and third stage of fieldwork. Firstly, instead of avoiding I frequently provoked (even when not being asked) my respondents to express their expectations from me. I have also started acknowledging the differences that exist between "me" and "them". Secondly, in the semi-structured interview format, I consciously provided space for counter-questioning. This creates a dialogic version of the fieldwork. In one such occasion, Subhas, CPIML (Red Star) political worker and community mobiliser states "*We expect you to showcase our stories to a larger audience*". Similar rhetoric was echoed by different stakeholders during the second stage of my fieldwork.

Following the arguments on policy and territory by Cochrane and Ward (2012), the field also needs to be constructed both in motion and embedded in space as a field is also an outcome of overlapping and interconnected socio-spatial relations (Cochrane and Ward, 2012). Laksman's call and my dissatisfaction can be read through this contradictory tension of fixity and mobility. My dissatisfaction is constructed through my geographical displacement from the 'field' when I am in the U.K. Simultaneously, with this phone call Laksman also reminds me my 'field' is always in the motion. To negotiate this positionality, Abu-Lughod (2000) proposes 'ethnography of the

particular'. 'Ethnography of the particular' helps us not to convert interlocuters as objects for data and restricts distancing self from the subjects through continuous bargaining and negotiations (Abu-Lughod, 2000). This is a process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation simultaneously. Familiarisation includes my existence in the field and learning through my embodied performances. Defamiliarization resists the complete dislocation of that knowledge, both material and metaphoric. In my process of defamiliarization, Laksman and other respondents and my socio-spatial relations with them become the foci. In this research, my continuous interrogations with self and resistance to the 'detached gaze' are negotiated in two ways. Firstly, my frequent engagement of self with its own contradictions, puzzles, and uncertainty are reflected in the analysis chapters through excerpts from field notes, presenting self in the dialogue with my respondents and personalised reflections. Secondly, I construct my analysis with thick extracts of my interview respondents and also descriptions of their life histories (in case study 2).

These continuous negotiations, conscious (sometimes latent) choices are also entangled with politics of care and support mostly provided by family members and politics of sharing. The literature on fieldwork is often silent about these important factors by 'masculinist epistemology' (Sundberg, 2003). This is also partially reflected in my fieldwork, where the majority of my respondents are male. However, interviews with 3 women respondents (Kamala- Squatter Dweller in Salt Lake and community mobiliser; Sharmila- CPIML Red Star leader and Councillor of Salt Lake) are extremely important for the analysis because of their respective positions in power networks. The analysis includes thick interview transcripts of these women. Politics of care is also often missing in the discussion of fieldwork (Silva and Gandhi, 2018). Silva and Gandhi (2018) show how parental support during their respective fieldworks was an essential component of their fieldworks. In my case during and after my fieldwork the support given by my mother through everyday activities of household chores, answering calls in my Indian cell-phone after completion of my fieldwork and also by arranging contact details for the local councillor. Politics of sharing during my fieldwork involves having dinner with my respondents, invitation for their family occasions and sharing laugh, anger, dissatisfaction over cups of tea. This politics of sharing helps me partially to be part of the everyday life and emotions of my respondents. This also restricts me from a voyeuristic perception of events.

The above discussion on the representation of 'self' within the field site does two things. Firstly, it demonstrates how various forms of power relations shape our fieldwork and secondly; it also shows how ethnographic fieldwork is dialogic. After positioning self within the field site, next section elaborates on the nature of field site by briefly discussing the nature of the state in India which is followed by detailing out everyday state in Kolkata and subsequently description of case studies.

4.3 State Structure in India

To understand the nature of the state within the field site, it is also important to unpack the federal state structure in India. Due to the influence of colonialism, a Westminster-style representative democracy was initially incorporated into Indian federal structure after independence. Much literature (Lijphart, 1996; McMillan, 2008) shows Indian democracy as an exceptional or 'deviant democracy' because of its adaptation to colonial rule, appropriation of that in the federal structure and finally to satisfy the demands of a huge and heterogeneous electorate. In relation to this, McMillan (2008) notes, "A society divided by numerous social cleavages – including language, religion, caste, tribe, region, and class – proved resistant to stable majority control. While blurring the lines of accountability and responsiveness, the political system provided most minority groups with some chance of democratic participation and presented politicians incentives to seek broad social coalitions" (McMillan, 2008: 746). One more interesting feature of Indian federalism was the almost simultaneous occurrence of institutional decentralisation and globalisation and privatisation. In 1991, the Indian economy opened its door for foreign investment along with the participation of private parties in various sectors of the economy which were nationalised before (example banking). The very next year in 1992, Indian constitution brought two amendments which are known as 73rd (for rural) and 74th (for urban) constitutional amendments where rural and urban local bodies were constitutionally allowed to take part in the decision-making process. Until this, planning and decision-making power-sharing were concentrated between the federal union and regional states. This indicates a unique feature of Indian federalism. One way the federal-state limits state intervention in the market by adopting a neoliberal approach. The other way it also gave power to the local institutions in the decision-making process by adopting decentralisation. The constitution provided power to rural (*Panchayat*) and urban (Municipalities) for

economic development, social justice beyond the provision of civic amenities (Kumar and Ray, 2012). Rao (2002) argues that during the colonial period, centralisation of administrative and fiscal power was a colonial necessity. However, it was also difficult for the central federal state to govern a large and diverse geographic area for which some power was given to the regional units (states). He states that after 1935 Indian republic adopted a 'quasi-federal' system (Rao, 2002). He further indicates, three separate lists were prepared for power-sharing. Issues of regional importance (public health, agriculture etc.) were placed in the State list, those which required a cooperative solution placed in the concurrent list (criminal law, marriage, forest etc.) and rest (defence, atomic energy, industry etc.) were placed in the union list. Quasi-federalism in India is also characterised by another unique character where the decision-making and planning process were largely decentralised, but the financial decentralisation process was not adequate. This limits the autonomy of local-level institutions.

The above discussion on the Indian federal state highlights three important things. Firstly, the federal union and regional state authorities have distinctive power-sharing and decision-making abilities which are provided constitutionally. Here, the regional state authority plays an important role in the urban everyday life along with urban local bodies. Though local bodies have certain decision-making powers, as it is financially largely dependent on the regional state, often their autonomy is regulated by the regional state. Secondly, in everyday life of the urban political affiliation of the federal union government has the least influence. However, major urban programs are designed by the federal union but delivered by the regional state through the urban local bodies. So, the presence of the federal union is not direct but more contingent through policies and programs. Finally, it also highlights how indeterminacy is part of state formation and influence of the colonialism. This indeterminacy is visible through a simultaneous occurrence of marketisation of the economy and institutional decentralisation and constitutional provision of decision-making power but lack of financial autonomy to local level institutions. Continuing from this discussion, the next section elaborates on Kolkata's political history within the regional state of West Bengal. The idea of state majorly used in this thesis is only limited to the regional state of West Bengal.

4.4 Situating the Research in Field Site- Kolkata

My link with Kolkata is both professional and personal – it's the city where I grew up and lived for more than twenty years. However, although this means I am entangled with Kolkata through my memories, through my political actions, through love, hate, anger and celebrations, it's also the city from which I am currently relocated in order to carry out my academic and professional activities. I find I have continuously negotiated these differential positions whenever I visit. The reasons for me to situate my research in Kolkata are manifold. Firstly, being the colonial capital under British rule Kolkata also portrays various conditions of postcoloniality as discussed in the previous chapter. Secondly, West Bengal is a state ruled by one of the longest-serving communist governments in the world for 34 years (1977-2011). Kolkata being the capital of the state, was a left bastion for these 34 years and simultaneously reflected the paradoxical nature of left politics, which is also deeply entangled with the urban space. Finally, my own personal attachments with Kolkata situates me within the zones of familiarity. Simultaneously, my continuous displacement from there also allows me to navigate through these zones of familiarity with a 'deliberate alienation'. To unpack the complex political economy of the city, this section first discusses Kolkata's political history and then explains how this political history of Kolkata shapes the urbanity.

4.4.1 Kolkata's Political History

Almost three decades, the regional state of West Bengal was ruled by the communist party. The Left- Front of West Bengal is the longest-serving communist government in world history (Roy, 2003a). It was formed after a period of political instability caused by a coalition government and a state of emergency in 1977. The Left- Front in West Bengal was in power until the 2011 state election. This period of 34 years of left government rule was marked by a complex political history. The Left-front orchestrated one of the first land reforms (Operation Barga) of India in Bengal to continue their political patronage towards the farmers. The Left- Front also created several grassroots organisations like (*Krishak Sabha* [Farmers Committee], Hawkers Union, Centre for Indian Trade Unions, etc. to create a mechanism for sustained vote bank politics. The state also constructed pro-poor rhetoric through these grassroots

organisations. The refugees from the eastern part of Bengal received political patronage from the left government through the institutionalisation of (il)legal occupancy of lands. The success of their land reform program is always a contested issue. Citing Harriss (1993) and Beck (1994), Roy (2003) shows the landlessness in rural Bengal was about 40%, which depicts the minimal impact of land reforms.

The mode of left politics in West Bengal has gone through various transformations. The emergence of left politics has a deep-rooted history. During the colonial period Manabendra Roy was instrumental in founding the Radical Democratic Party. At the end of the nineteenth century, the nationalist movement against the colonial government was deeply embedded in the revolutionary nationalism which originated from Bengal. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM) was formed in the post-independence period (1964) after splitting from the Communist Party of India (CPI). At its initial stage, CPIM followed a revolutionary path which criticised the Indian bourgeois class as an extension of imperialism. This class struggle got momentum in 1967 with 'Naxalbari Uprising' an armed revolution by peasants. The Naxal movement continued till 1977. However, the Naxal movement also propelled further splits within the party. Some of the members distanced themselves from the revolutionary path of the party line formed by Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal. In 1968, the party was separated from the revolutionary Marxists (Naxal). The contradiction between parliamentary communism and radical communism is always a part of the transformation of CPIM. After getting elected in 1977, CPIM first launched 'Operation Barga' a major land reform movement which continued till mid-1980's. With all its limitations, Operation Barga helped the left front to build a very strong farmer's network in the rural parts of Bengal.

One of the major influxes of refugees came to Bengal after independence from East Pakistan. This propelled Dandakarnya Rehabilitation Plan in 1956 by the central government for rehabilitation of Bengali refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). This plan was always opposed by the left front as the plan proposed rehabilitation of Bengali refugees outside Bengal in the cleared forest of Dandakarnya. After coming to power, the left front asked the refugees to settle in the island of Marichjhapi within the mangrove forest of Sundarban (Sengupta, 2011). However, the same government declared Marichjhapi an illegal occupation by the refugees in 1979.

Finally, that led to an economic blockade of Marichjahpi island by the state. This economic blockade by the state took a violent turn when the residents resisted, and finally, the state curtailed that with massive police violence which led to the death of hundreds of villagers. The displacement, violence and otherness by the state are wonderfully portrayed in Amitava Ghosh's (2004) fiction 'Hungry Tides'. Ghosh's (2004) portrayal of Marchijhapi is significant for certain reasons. Firstly, it constructs postcolonial space by transcending boundaries between land and water, the complex relationship between the mainland and the island. Secondly, it portrays how 'otherness' as discourse is constructed by the postcolonial state towards the refugee population during Marichjhapi which is still prevalent in the narratives from my respondents in Salt Lake (discussed in detail in analysis chapters). Marichjhapi incident also showcases the paradoxical nature of the left government, which often oscillates between sympathetic view towards refugees (critical of Dandakarnya Rehabilitation Plan) and massive state violence on the refugees.

With its ever-growing grassroots support, the left front's focus on political mobilisation in the urban areas was observable with mushrooming of Local Committees (LC) in Kolkata. By 1980-90, LCs became an important apparatus of left politics. The LCs started mediating every local dispute from family troubles to land disputes. Irrespective of its class heterogeneity the LCs members had only one fixed agenda to vote for CPIM (Mukharji, 2009). Mukherji notes "This trend of using the party machinery to depoliticize disputes and to render them as "glitches" in the system in need of right management" (Mukharji, 2009). He also mentions this was not only limited to LCs but became a part of CPIM's strategy to 'run' the system properly by intervening in everyday life of the people. This also shows another paradox of left politics. Through party machinery, CPIM fetishised the organisational capacity over actual praxis the very same process which Marx was critical about (Mukharji, 2009). This also led to gradual alienation of class struggles from the party objective through practice. It rather helped the left front for the hegemonic appropriation of power.

The LCs also helped the left front to shift their focus more towards the urban middle-class Hindu population. It was also able to capture the cultural iconography of '*bhadrakalok*'. In relation to this, by citing Dasgupta (2005) Mukharji (2009) states "In so doing, however, it has often been reduced to the level of a fetishized facet of ethnic

identity rather than a matter of critical reflection and praxis” (Mukharji, 2009: 94). The construction of Bengali '*bhadralok*' identity also has a complex history. The cultural iconography of Bengali '*bhadralok*' represents western-educated Hindu middle-class people who are apparently liberal and “innovative civilising citizens” contrary to the “uncivilised” pre-Aryan inhabitants (Basu, 2010). With the analysis of Geography curriculum and literary works, Basu (2010) shows the geographical knowledge is constructed with contingent racial rhetoric and not completely separated from the pre-colonial era. The knowledge system is developed through a dialectical process. On the one hand, the pre-colonial knowledge resisted the European knowledge, and on the other hand, it selectively synthesised with certain parts of European knowledge and constructed post-colonial knowledge system (Basu, 2010). The '*bhadralok*' identity is also constructed through this dialectical process where colonial gentlemanly masculinity was contextualised with certain Bengali characteristics. The left front also relentlessly ascribed to this '*bhadralok*' identity. The upper echelon of the CPIM party is always represented by upper-caste middle-class Hindu politicians. This is another paradox that was prominent with left front politics where working-class voices and demands were always echoed through middle-class politicians.

After the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1991, again a paradoxical tension of global (capital investment) and local (vote bank clientelism) was observable among left parties. In 1996, the left government organised massive eviction of hawkers from the streets, and the operation was named 'Operation Sunshine' (Chatterji and Roy, 2016). This indicates the transformation of left politics to more of an opportunist politics. 'Operation Sunshine' was also an attempt to create Kolkata as a 'gentleman's city' through order and discursive practices (Roy, 2011a). Following the eviction drive, massive defeat in the next municipal election, the Left parties attempted to re-establish the clientelism mechanism. The brutal representations of left fronts contradictions were visible in police brutality in *Singur* and *Nandigram* regarding the forceful acquisition of farming lands. Finally, this led to CPIM's defeat in the 2011 assembly election.

The *Singur* and *Nandigram* movements were pivotal in the emergence of Trinamool Congress (T.M.C.) as the ruling party. T.M.C. constructed the new political rhetoric *Ma- Mati- Manush* (Mother- Land- People) to showcase their involvement and

sympathy towards the farmer's protests in *Singur* and *Nandigram*. The construction of this mother cult was also an attempt for political mobilisation with robust sentimental nationalist rhetoric (Bose and Chakravarty, 2012). Bose and Chakravarty (2012) also identify this rhetoric replaced the "morally vacuous" left with an "old humanist, amorphous but important" rhetoric. From the very beginning of T.M.C.'s ruling they adopted a populist agenda by introducing certain programs like Kanyashree Scheme in 2013 (cash transfers to marginalised families with girl child), Sabuj Sathi in 2015 (giving bicycles to the students of classes IX, X, XI and XII), giving grants to the neighbourhood clubs (discussed in detail in chapter 5) etc. This populist agenda helped to secure a massive majority to T.M.C. in the following Parliamentary as well as Assembly elections. Citing Samaddar (2016) Nath (2018) states this was 'subalternisation of politics' where poor people identify T.M.C. as their protector (Nath, 2018). This is also very much echoed during my fieldwork conversation with the squatter dweller of Salt Lake. T.M.C. also strengthened the local tyrant networks through its Syndicate Raj (explained in chapter 5). However, with the rise of right-wing populism across India, there has been a dwindled majority of T.M.C.s populism in the last Parliamentary election in 2019. The table below explains the major political events in Kolkata. These political events also shaped the urban history and development of Kolkata, which is explained in the next section.

Table 6 Chronology of Major Political Events

Time Period	Major Events	Impact
1947	Indian Independence	Refugee influx from East Bengal (Bangladesh)
1967–1971	Coalition government	Political instability
1971	Bangladesh Liberation War	Influx of refugee from Bangladesh
1971-1977	State of Emergency	Further deepening of political instability
1977	Left- Front came in power	Initiation of communist government

1978-80	Launching of land reform program Operation <i>Barga</i>	Initiation of populist politics by the Left- Front and strengthening of vote banks
1987	Very low industrial output of the state of West Bengal (lower than 1965 figures)	Dwindling industrial base of the state
1991	Liberalisation of Indian economy through New Economic Policies	Circulation of global capital started
1996	Operation Sunshine (eviction of hawkers from Kolkata)	Left- Front defeat in Kolkata Municipal Corporation election of 2000. This is also marked as the emergence of strong opposition against the communist government
1999	Launching of Rajarhat New Towns Project under West Bengal Housing Board	Initiation of PPP in housing and massive land acquisition by the state through grassroots mobilisation
2007-2011	Forceful land acquisition in <i>Singur</i> and <i>Nandigram</i> in 2007-08	Violent movement and finally defeat of Left- Front in state Assembly election of 2011
2011- 2019	Rise of Trinamool Congress (T.M.C.) as state ruling party	New cult rhetoric of populist politics and new political vocabularies of <i>Ma Mati Manush</i> [Mother Land People] Complete domination in the political landscape of Bengal
2019	Rise of BJP in Parliamentary Election	Dwindling T.M.C.'s control and religious polarisation as a result of emergence of BJP as major political opposition

The above discussion on Kolkata's political history shows the nature of the everyday state in Kolkata. This also elaborates how certain social relations (*bhadralok* identity), class struggles (Operation Sunshine) and formation of postcolonial capitalism are shaped by the political history of Kolkata. To understand how this political history is manifested spatially, the next section discusses Kolkata's urban history.

4.4.2 Kolkata's Urban History

Very few cities have bred multiple myths like Kolkata. Many of the myths highlight the poverty, misery and uncanniness of the urban space. For Rudyard Kipling, it was the "the City of Dreadful Night," an oppressive, crowded city blanketed by a "dense wet heat" and the cries of "yelling jackals" (Bose, 2007). As Bose (2007) explains, for many of the 19th-century urban intelligentsia, it is 'city of palaces'. The famous 1985 novel by Dominique Lapierre describes it as the 'city of joy'- a city which constructs an optimistic narrative of living despite poverty and sufferings. Desmond Doig (1968) a European artist once described 'Calcutta much abused, much loved & always interesting'. The ex-prime minister of India Rajiv Gandhi (1980) once described it as 'dying city' because of its increasing unemployment and collapse of urban services. Simon Winchester (2004), an author, described Calcutta as 'a terrible, beautiful city'. A renowned filmmaker Mrinal Sen rightly describes this contradiction as "Calcutta is a city of glaring contrasts: a curious blend of the old and the new, partly feudal, partly born out of growing urbanisation, partly indefinable" (Sen, 2004).

These contradictory imageries of Kolkata signify its varied histories and realities. Chakravorty (2000) describes a three-stage model for the urban development of Kolkata: 1. Colonial economy during the first global period 2. Postcolonial economy during the nationalist period 3. Post command/ reform economy during the global period. This three-stage process coupled with varied political histories makes Kolkata a unique example of a postcolonial city. As the capital of the Empire, Kolkata's industrial expansion started with jute industries. Kolkata's urban fabric was never organised coherently. Colonial power was accumulated incrementally and sporadically (Chattopadhyay, 2015).

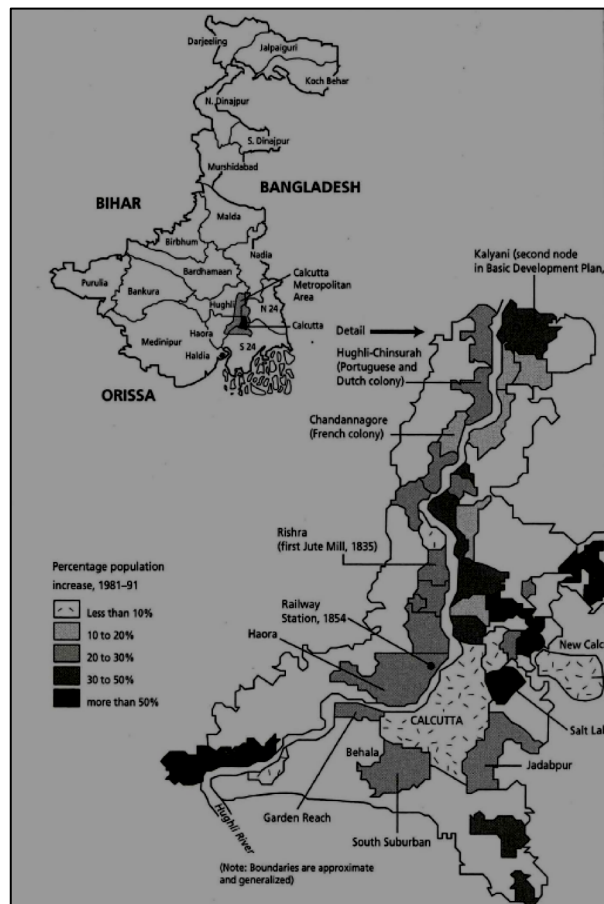


Figure 2 Kolkata's Urban Development during Colonial Period

Source: Adapted from Chakravorty 2000

The decline of jute mills because of the Freight Equalisation Policy⁵ (1956) aggravated the problem of industrialisation as the 'hinterland' of Kolkata was hardly industrialised (Chakravorty 2000). Kolkata's migration history is also quite varied. The first root of migration was prominent during British rule, whose labour recruitment policy facilitated migration to create a pool of urban labourers (Roy, 2003a). The second major influx of migration from the eastern part of Bengal (now Bangladesh) was observed after

⁵ The policy equalised prices for essential commodities (coal, steel) and private sector produced items (cotton) were not controlled. But the price of jute remained stable and reduced the possibilities of profit maximisation.

From Chakravorty S (2000): From Colonial City to Globalizing City? The far-from-complete Spatial Transformation of Calcutta

independence (1947). According to the 1951 census of India, the refugee population from East Bengal was about 2.5 million out of which approximately 2 million settled in different parts of West Bengal. This migration was predominantly a religious migration of Hindus from the eastern part of Bengal. The refugee issue and the politics associated with it has already been described (ibid. 4.4.1). The dwindling capacity of urban service provision by the municipality was visible during this period (post-independence) with population increase (about 2 million).

The current spatial pattern of Kolkata has a significant colonial history. The racial segregation of housing during the colonial time was not a complete ghettoisation. Rather prominent enclaves were never formed in Kolkata. There always existed a circulatory pattern between the European part and non-European part of the city. Chattopadhyay (2005) in her book, 'Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny' defines this hybridisation of space. My earlier study (2011) also attempts to capture this hybridisation process through spatial histories of colonial space in terms of culture, architectural elements and modification of spaces (Ray, 2011). This hybridisation process helps to develop certain specific spatiality and everyday practices.

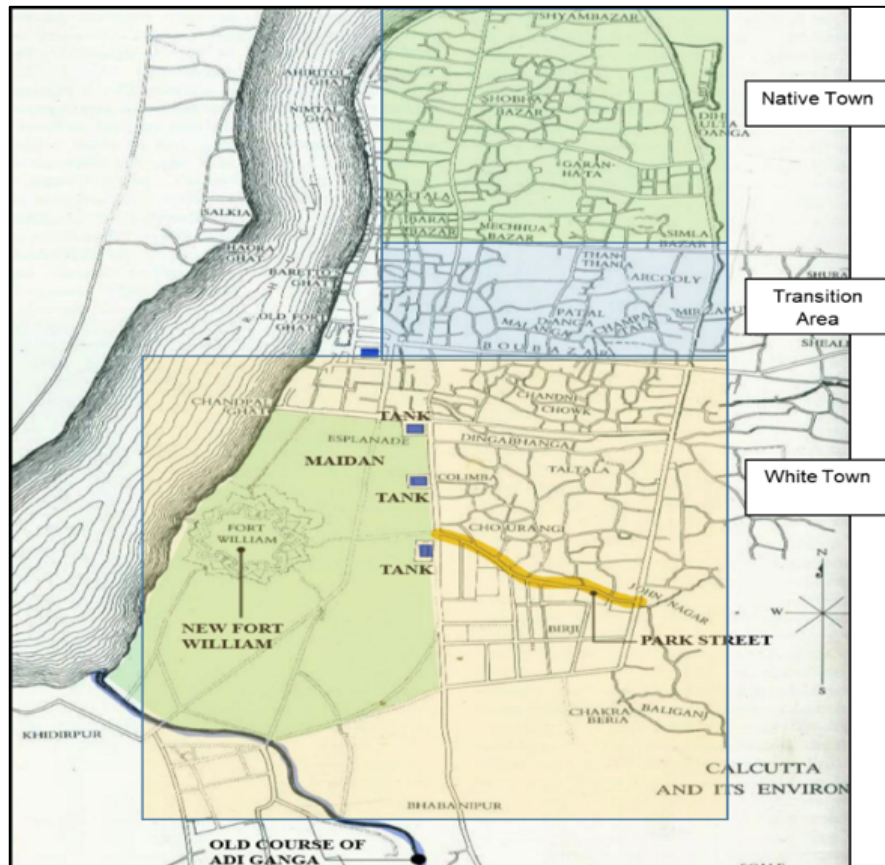


Figure 3 Zones of Circulation in Colonial Kolkata (Calcutta) (Based on Upjohn's Survey, (1792-93)

After coming to power, the left front focused on the rural population, where landless farmers were important to class struggles. This was also reflected in their industrial policy, which was a reflection of class struggles for means of production. However, the left front shifted from that ideology in 1994 by inviting foreign capital and technologies. Their radical praxis and scepticism to global capital were reversed to make Bengal an attractive destination for capital investments. The state government also allowed private participation in the health, education and infrastructure sectors (Das, 2019). Das (2019) also states they have created a unique rhetoric by including discrimination by the central government within the investment-friendly discourse. This was a measured political agenda where inclination towards capital investment was supported without losing their core political base. This interventionist approach to global capitalism was also a unique case where the circulation of capital was promoted through a process of translation and negotiations (Das, 2019). Roy (2011a) identifies

three types of development through capital investments in the context of urban development. The first was a continuation of planned township projects based on Salt Lake model (discussed in chapter 4.5.2). Rajarhat- New Town township, *Baisnabghata- Patuli* townships are some of the examples of that. These were developed by the West Bengal Housing Development Board and Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (K.M.D.A.). The second developed through Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) between KMDA and different private bodies. The third type is identified by the development of housing subdivisions by private parties (Roy, 2011a). This third type predominantly focuses on attracting what Bose (2007) calls ‘diasporic capital’. The diasporic capital was invested mostly by filling up East Kolkata Wetlands, converting agricultural lands in peri-urban areas or through the displacement of people (Bose, 2007). The reflection of this ‘diasporic capital’ is also visible on the website of the upcoming Trump Tower in Kolkata. This led to various conflicts related to urban lands. Antenucci’s (2017) study on the security agencies of Kolkata shows how the business of security agencies flourished to regulate the conflicts at those sites and use security as a filter to guard these contested spaces (Antenucci, 2017)

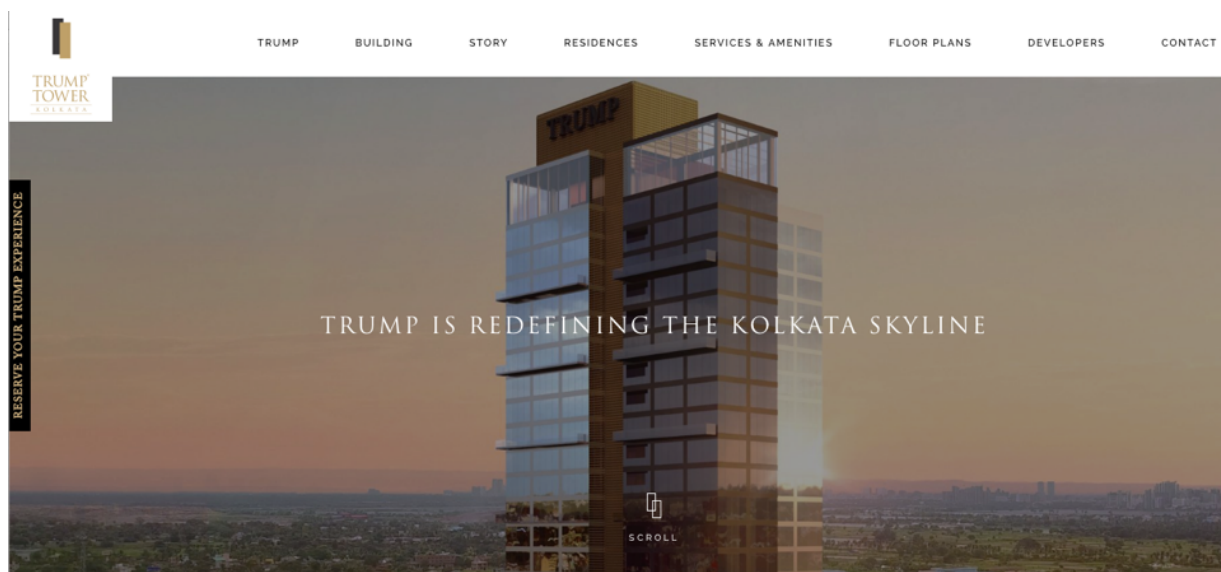


Figure 4 Diasporic Capital

Directing global capital to the urban (Kolkata) was strategically conducted by the Left-Front to strengthen its vote bank politics in the urban area. The channelisation of capital in real estate helped the Left-Front government to capitalise the huge informal labour pool. On the one hand, the state was representing pro-poor rhetoric by

tokenism of informal labourers in real estate. On the other hand, it was also following the vocabularies of the world-class city by facilitating real estate. Roy (2003a) sees this as rejuvenation of the left's political and economic agenda through urban development. The absence of state land development policy during this time is a perfect example of this. The absence of such policy helped the Left- Front to make land an ambiguous subject and also a tool for political patronage. The paradoxical tension of the left's political agenda and neoliberal capital again resurfaced in 2007 with the forceful land acquisition for industrialisation and creation of SEZs which finally resulted in massive electoral defeats in the 2011 state assembly election as discussed above (ibid 4.4.1).

The above discussion on Kolkata's urban history shows how postcolonial capital in the urban is manifested spatially. It also highlights how certain social relations have a colonial lineage which still dominates Kolkata's political rhetoric and how the everyday state participates as a constituent part of that. Finally, the discussion of Kolkata's urban history points out how heterogeneity, indeterminacy, constituency as tropes are important to understand the spatial politics of Kolkata. The thesis argues that urban margins are those zones which help to unpack the complexities (forms of capital, heterogenous relations and their spatial manifestations, nature of the everyday state) that exist in the postcolonial urbanism. To do so, the next section first critically engages with the conceptualisation of urban margins and explains the approach which is used for this research. Then it explains three types of urban margins which are used to collect empirics for this research.

4.5 Urban Margins- New Geographies of Power and Encounters

Postcolonial capitalism operates through the creation of new zones for capital circulation (ibid 2.2.2). These zones are not identical or homogenous in nature. These are 'machine-like apparatuses' which reconfigure the spatial forms by setting different logics of spatial relations, economic laws and different categories of dispossession (Samaddar, 2015). These are new urban frontiers which re-establish logics of postcolonial capitalism and simultaneously also create new agnostic socio-spatial relations (Smith, 1996; Leitner *et al.*, 2007). In his work on gentrification, Smith (1996) states: "The gentrification frontier absorbs and retransmits the distilled optimism of a

new city, the promise of economic opportunity, the twin thrills of romance and rapacity; it is the place where the future will be made” (Smith, 1996: 186). For Smith (1996) frontiers are the new seductive zones where utopia and dystopia collide, new investment flourishes and new spatial imageries are built. Tsing (2005) provides a slightly different perspective to frontiers in her book ‘Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection’. For her, frontiers are not just edges; rather, they are the zones which are still unplanned, unmapped (Tsing, 2005). They portray multiple spatiotemporal subjectivities where new relations are formed, which destabilise the boundaries between legality and illegality. “Frontiers are deregulated because they arise in the interstitial spaces made by collaborations among legitimate and illegitimate partners: armies and bandits; gangsters and corporations; builders and despoilers. They confuse the boundaries of law and theft, governance and violence, use and destruction” (Tsing, 2005: 27). For Tsing (2005) frontiers are an imaginative project, a space of desire, a space of encounters where multiple categorisations are enacted, and instability is persisted. It is a space whose recognition is still waiting and ‘dialectics at a standstill’ (Roy, 2011c).

The research focuses on three case studies which are shaped by different historiography, different paths of postcolonial capital accumulation and variegated forms of encounters with the state. It considers these cases as variegated forms of margins. ‘Margins’ here necessarily do not mean any kind of bounded territory. Rather it establishes ‘margins’ as the sites of negotiations and embodied everyday practices of conflict politics. They constantly destabilise orderly arrangements of state and reproduces certain modes of ‘order and lawmaking’ (Das and Poole, 2004). Margins here portray the relationship between violence and ordering functions of the state, the sites of practices which do not lie outside the dominant discourse rather at every occasion tries to threaten the state through various forms of encounters. Here different forms membership of inclusion reside with exclusion and dispossession and redefine new languages of stateness (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001; Das and Poole, 2004). These are similar to what Yiftachel (2009b) mentions as ‘grey spaces’. They are grey because they are always positioned between ‘whiteness of legality’ and ‘blackness of evictions and dispossession’ (Yiftachel, 2009b, 2009a). There is always a pseudo-permanent exists through ‘quiet encroachment of the ordinary’ (Alsayyad and Roy, 2004; Yiftachel, 2009b). These are zones of dynamic assemblages of bodies, groups,

relations and transactions (Yiftachel, 2015). Dynamic because of the instability of social category and unpredictability, precariousness and discursiveness (Tsing, 1994; Simone, 2007). In the context of grey spaces at Beersheba Yiftachel (2009b) identifies three characteristics: hanging on to the land against eviction, memory building and autonomous politics. The discursive politics, which operates in 'grey spaces' continuously threatens the same power, which attempts to derecognise them but not always in a heroic manner. The practices are subtle; here, otherness is familiar but stays at a distance. There is an opacity that serves useful purposes of state and capitalism (Gidwani and Maringanti, 2016). This ambiguity serves a two-fold aim. It helps the postcolonial state to promote capital accumulation without being fully registered, and it also promotes a selective allowance of rights for the people at the margins of the state for its political survival.

At this juncture, the research defines urban margins as zones of everyday encounter with the postcolonial state where the state is present through its silence and violence. Here urban margins are the 'zones of awkward engagements' (Tsing 2005), an open site for the enactment of different political relations but also exists in the precariousness of stability, oscillate between being legal and illegal. However, these are also generative zones, spaces for political innovation and often challenges the postcolonial state through its discursive politics. As urban margins in this research include three case studies with varied geo-histories, multiple actors and socio-spatial relations, a flexible approach to the sites and relations is required to unpack the complexity.

The next subsection explains three types of urban margins in Kolkata, which are used as case studies for this research.

4.5.1 Urban Margin 1- Primitive accumulation- Loomtex Jute Mill Worker's Movement

In my neighbourhood of Agarpara, most of the house-helps come from the area of *Titagarh* who are predominantly Muslim. Their prominent cultural identity in my urban middle-class neighbourhood is articulated in the colloquial term '*Titagarh Party*' or literally people from *Titagarh*. Here, this colloquial vocabulary has a deep-rooted meaning of otherness. This otherness is constructed through various forms of cultural

and identity politics. *Titagarh* area is predominantly an industrial area where almost 41% of the main workers are industrial workers (*Population Census Data, 2011*) and non-Bengali speaking Muslims. Historically, the migrant population from other states of India were absorbed in the jute mills of this area, which makes *Titagarh* area linguistically a prominent non- Bengali speaking area. In another way, it also unsettles the Bengali middle-class identity of '*bhadralok*'. The public discourse of Bengali '*bhadralok*' identity constructed through a class identity, which was crucial for colonial education and service. Citing Guha (1992), Roy (2003) calls this identity as 'double articulation of dominance' (Ananya Roy, 2003a). On the one hand, this '*bhadralok*' class usually dominates the political and cultural spheres of West Bengal even during contemporary times. While on the other hand, they often tend to represent and shape the voice of the subaltern in the dominant discourse. The colloquial vocabulary of '*Titagarh Party*' is constructed through this 'double articulation of dominance'. This also shapes the stigmatisation of *Titagarh* area as a dirty, unorganised urban space where 'hijras' and thieves usually live. This shapes the rhetoric of territorial stigmatisation through 'discrediting differentness' (Wacquant, Slater and Pereira, 2014). When my middle-class Hindu neighbours learnt that I am going to visit *Titagarh* for my fieldwork, they raised their eyebrows wondering why a 'foreign' resident, educated middle- class person like me is visiting *Titagarh*.



Figure 5 Loomtex Mill Area

On a December morning of 2016, when I first planned to visit Loomtex mill located in *Titagarh*- I was anxious. Such anxiousness was constructed through my middle-class upbringing with the vocabulary of '*Titagrah Party*' and being aware of the violent mill politics of Loomtex.



Figure 6 Loomtex Neighbourhood

After I entered the narrow lane of the worker's residence, it was visibly an impoverished neighbourhood. The country liquor drinking den was open even at 10 in the morning; garbage was piled up at the corner of the street, some drunkards were idly sitting in front of the drinking den. For a moment, I felt a sudden uncanniness like Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov, with the smell of country liquor mixed with the uncleared garbage, those curious eyes examining my presence and my never-ending consciousness of my middle class educated appearance. I could also see the workers were not entering the mill because of a prolonged strike. The strike was a protest for gate bahar⁶ of 8 workers for non - specified reasons. This strike, as a form of conflict politics, is to involve with the mill management, to unsettle the hegemonic power and constructs the subaltern subject an important political agent for social change. At this juncture, I construct Loomtex mill as my 'zone of awkward engagement' which not only destabilises my '*bhadralok*' identity with its subaltern narratives but also challenges the dominant discourse of power through its practices.

For Marx, primitive accumulation is a process where labour generates commodities and surplus value. This subsequently separates the producer from the means of production. Marx sees this as a transformation of social relations where surplus capital immediately makes producers into wage-labourers (Glassman, 2006). The process of

⁶ Gate bahar is a process by which management curtails working rights for an indefinite time period without serving him/her any notice

primitive accumulation has a temporal dimension in capitalist society as 'primitive' means a necessary past for capital to come into 'being' (De Angelis, 2001). Here primitive accumulation becomes a necessary pre-condition as it produces surplus value on which capital further thrives and increases its mobility. However, the case study of jute mill shows how primitive accumulation in the postcolonial world often deviates from this logic (discussed in 5.2).

4.5.2 Urban Margin 2- Bourgeois environmentalism- Anti Eviction Movement in Salt Lake Squatter Settlement

In a December morning, I was sitting in the office of the local councillor and discussing the recent eviction in Salt Lake as a part of my ethnographic fieldwork. A middle-aged man Asim entered into the office and sat next to the councillor, listened to our discussions also commented on why the hawkers of Kolkata do not deserve any rehabilitation. The final part of the discussion was related to the '(il)legal' Bangladeshi migrants in the squatters of the Salt Lake. Our conversation was about to end, and I was preparing to leave the office. Asim suddenly told me that even the person with whom you were speaking and having tea last Sunday is also from Bangladesh. The incident here was referred to my fieldwork with squatter dwellers, and without my knowledge, there were eyes behind my back and observing my activities. When Asim entered the office and spoke for half an hour, he didn't even mention he is aware of my activities. It was evident that Asim works for the councillor's office. For me, the incident was a moment of realisation about the surveillance by the state. This also poses an important question of what is the state? Is it only an institution which operationalises various regulations, artefacts and metaphors? Is the state all about relations of power? Or is the state can be conceptualised as the apparatus for

‘domination and servitude’? This moment for understanding stateness also intrigued me to locate the sites where the state can be found.

To do so, instead of looking at the obvious spaces of state power, I shift my focus to the urban margins where the state exists in a contingent form. Here, the state engages with subaltern

subjects in an illegible form. Here, on the one hand the state evicts subaltern subjects with the aspirations of being a world-class city.

Simultaneously

the state also

mobilises subaltern subjects through a politics of patronage for their political survival. At this juncture, the squatter settlements of Salt Lake become another ‘zone of awkward engagement’.



Figure 7 Salt Lake Squatter Settlement

Several studies highlight, that with the advent of global capitalism environment becomes the new agenda for capital accumulation and dispossession (Zerah and Landy, 2013; Doshi, 2018b; Schindler and Kanai, 2018). The environment is used as a trope for the inflow of capital and logics for displacement, which Baviskar (2002, 2006) terms as ‘bourgeois environmentalism’. The political-ecological claims in the urban is constructed by multiple subjectivities of the environment. These subjectivities are also shaped by postcolonial history, territorial logics and differential power relations (Zerah and Landy, 2013; Doshi, 2018a). Elite resistance and subsequent displacements of poor are often justified with these subjectivities of the environment (Mawdsley, 2004; Ghertner, 2012). Datta (2012) argues that because of multiple subjectivities of the environment, often two contesting forces are enacted in the same site, which results in conflict politics. On the one hand, elite aspirations for ‘clean-green city’ rationalises displacement of the poor. These new aspirations are remarkably

present in the new brand imageries for Indian cities to become London or Shanghai. This rhetoric of aspirations is what Roy called as 'first worlding of postcolonial cities' (Roy, 2009c). Urban poor are the major hindrance for the 'first worlding' processes which Rajni Kothari (1993) called a 'growing amnesia' towards poverty and the poor (Fernandes, 2004). Fernandes also calls this the 'politics of forgetting' which is a political discursive process of exclusion of poor from the dominant political rhetoric. On the other hand, poor people exert their rights through occupancy of spaces. However, poor people's occupancy of space is not a homogeneous phenomenon. Class, gender, caste and other attributes shape different subjectivities of environment. These differential subjectivities and claim-making are enacted when poor people create a similar logic of exclusion among themselves (in my case Bangladeshi migrants and ragpickers). The case study 2 shows a classic example of bourgeois environmentalism where some of the squatter settlements were evicted, and some were on the verge of eviction for the rebranding of the city in the name of FIFA U-17 World Cup of 2017.

4.5.3 Urban Margin 3- New zones of capital circulation- Bhangar Anti Power Grid Movement.

The 91 C bus journey from Ultodanga to Lauhati takes almost two hours. However, this two-hour long journey for almost twice a week for three months was never a mundane one for me. The route resembles a microcosm of Kolkata's urban imagery as it passes through Bidhannagar, the satellite township of the 1970's; the Kolkata airport; newly planned city Rajarhat with luxurious condominiums and gated communities; Newtown the township under development; the peri-urban area with coexistence of condominiums along with paddy fields and brick kilns and finally the village areas.



Figure 8 Peri-urban area Bhangar

The route exemplifies the condition which Goldman (2011) calls 'speculative urbanism'. Speculative urbanism flourishes through converting "dead capital"⁷ into high value "liquid capital" that is real estate development (Goldman, 2011). Overlapping regimes of urban governance also characterise this speculative nature of urbanism

⁷ Dead Capital: Form of informally held asset which cannot easily be bought, sold, transferred and a hindrance for investment purposes.

From de Soto H. (2000): *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, New York, Basic Books; pp 6, 7

from the municipal corporation to municipality and finally rural areas governed by panchayats.

This new mode of capital accumulation through a multiplicity of governance institutions not only complicates the urban governance but also facilitates the state and the people at the margins to practice certain adhocism.

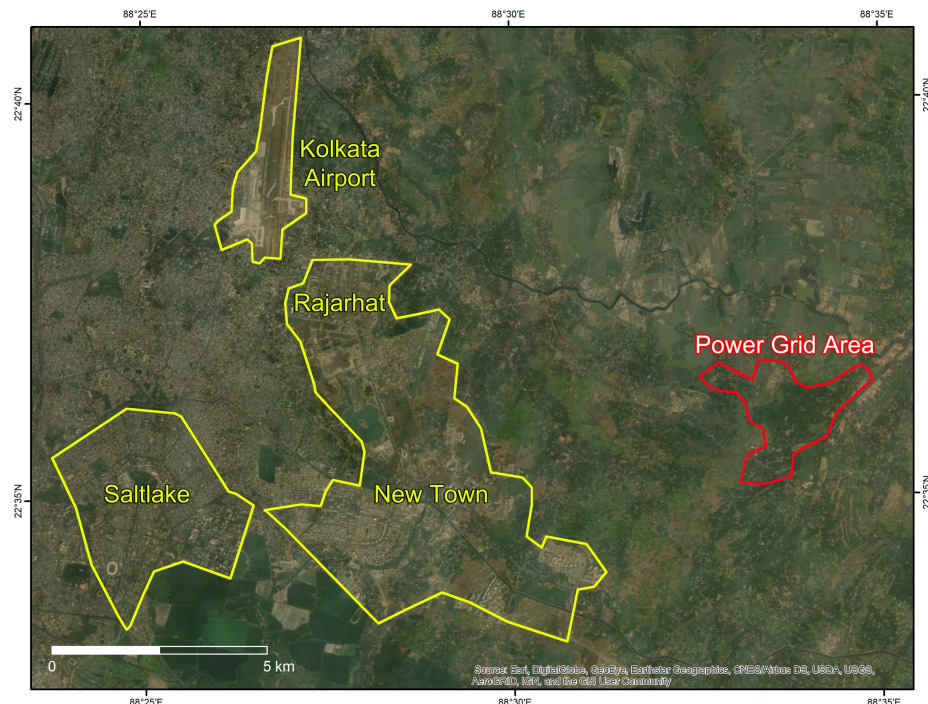


Figure 9 Bhangar Power-grid Area within the Region

Postcolonial capitalism has created new zones for higher circulation. Land in peri-urban areas become an apostle for higher value and velocity of circulation facilitates real estate development where accumulation happens at a faster speed as a 'high-value liquid capital' through land-use change. On the other hand, it accommodates the 'double reality' of postcolonial capitalism. It facilitates primitive accumulation through assets creations and virtual accumulation (investments from hedge funds, new financial policy regulations) (Samaddar, 2018). Being a peri-urban area in proximity to Kolkata and the newly planned city Rajarhat, the land areas in Bhangar represents the 'double realities of postcolonial capitalism. At this juncture, Bhangar becomes an urban margin in several ways. Firstly, being located in the periphery of Kolkata, Bhangar shows the complexity of urban governance with overlapping local institutions. Secondly, this also indicates how postcolonial capitalism finds new routes and logic of capital circulation in peri-urban areas and subsequent conflict associated with it.

The above discussion on each of the case studies highlights three things. Firstly, the nature of capital is different for each case. For case study 1 the capital is traditional industrial capital and associated politics can be identified as labour politics. The movement centred around worker's demand and the shop-floor of the Loomtex jute mill becomes an essential site for operationalisation of conflict politics (discussed in detail in chapter 5). In the second case study, the eviction at the urban margin happened through 'bourgeois environmentalism'. Here, eviction was rationalised in the name of 'clean and healthy living' and subsequently makes room for the circulation of postcolonial capital. The rationale of the environment in the planned township of Salt Lake is used for eviction of squatter dwellers by the state which was also supported by the majority of middle- and upper-class residents of Salt Lake. The counter politics against it can be identified as the politics of housing rights. In case study 3, land conversions happened to make room for 'liquid capital' of real estate and power trading. The counter politics here is associated with land politics. Secondly, the discussion on case studies shows how the postcolonial state operates differently in different contexts. This opens up possibilities for an alternative understanding of the postcolonial state based on the heterogeneous relationship it shares with the people at the urban margins. Finally, it shows how urban acts as a discursive field in Kolkata for operationalisation of various kinds of politics. This is further discussed in the analysis chapters 5 and 6.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter positions the research in the field site of Kolkata. It does so, by first positioning 'self' within the context of the field site. Then, it explains the nature of institutions in the Indian federal system. The chapter also discusses the nature of the everyday state in Kolkata by unpacking Kolkata's political and urban history. Finally, the chapter explains how this research defines urban margins and subsequently discusses how each case study constructs a different form of urban margin in Kolkata. The chapter highlights two things. Firstly, it shows how a field site is dynamic and relational with the intersection of various power relations. It also explains how field sites need to be considered beyond the territorial fixity. Secondly, the chapter highlights various levels of state in the Indian context and identifies why analysis of the everyday state is essential for this research. Finally, by explaining each of the case

study as a unique form of urban margin, this chapter highlights various forms of postcolonial capital and subsequent politics to counter the capital's circulation. To understand the counter politics to capital's circulation, the next chapter analyses and compare the empirics of conflict politics in each case study and finally develops a typology of conflict politics.

5 Differential Patterns of Capital Circulation and Subsequent Conflict Politics

“Even in the most uneventful of our lives, we are called upon to choose our battles...”

-Arundhati Roy, The Ministry of Utmost Happiness

5.1 Background

Kolkata, as a city is known for different kinds of strikes, not only industrial. The 34 years of ruling by communist parties have made strikes an essential part of urban living in Kolkata, where the infrastructures of circulations are always subject to be encircled (Roy, 2011c). Here, I present strikes as a form of relationship between the subaltern subjects and the postcolonial state. By subaltern subjects, I mean the subjects which neither originates from the dominant discourse nor dependent on the dominant discourse for their existence. They are rather autonomous subjects having multiple relations with the dominant discourse (Spivak, 1988). These subaltern subjects operate, modify, negotiate the dominant discourses both from inside and outside the network of dominant power relations. “subalternity erupts within the system of dominance and marks its limits from within, that its externality to dominant system of knowledge and power surfaces inside the system of dominance, but only as an intimation, as a trace of that which eludes the dominant discourse.” (Prakash, 2000: 288). Prakash (2000) also argues that the subaltern subjects force dominant discourses for contradictions and dislocations. I slightly depart from Prakash’s argument and argue the possibilities of rupture are dependent on the nature of the relationship, infrastructure to navigate across power networks and capitalisation of resources. This would be further elucidated with empirics from three case studies in the analysis part of this chapter.

It is already discussed (Section 2.5) that this thesis defines conflict politics as a form of discursive relationship between the state and people at the margins. This chapter demonstrates and compares various forms of conflict politics in each case studies based on the empirics from field visits. In section 5.4, the chapter maps different power networks in each of the case studies and shows how circulations of power are manifested in each study. In the final section of the chapter summary, the thesis explains how the analysis explains research questions a and b (ibid 1.3). To do so, the next section discusses the conceptualisation of conflict politics that is used for this research.

To demonstrate how this conceptualisation of conflict politics is played out in the selected case studies, the next section explains the differential patterns of conflict politics in each case study.

5.2 Analysis of Conflict Politics- Urban Margin 1- Primitive accumulation- Loomtex Jute Mill Worker's Movement

5.2.1 Historiography of Working-Class Politics in India

Many historians argue that working-class history in the Indian context is a pre-capitalist development where the labour force is not mature enough to qualify for capitalist development. However, there are also counterarguments to that which position the working-class history as neither pre-capitalist development nor exceptionalism in Indian society. Working-class history in the Indian context in relation to sociological discourse is shaped by caste, religion and other sociological attributes (Chandavarkar, 1998). Chandavarkar (1998) also suggests that capitalist formation of the 20th century was determined by two contradictory forces: disciplining the labour force and struggle to control. Labour politics both within and beyond the shop floor was always an outcome of negotiations with the options available within capitalist development. Chandavarkar (1997) identifies four phases of Indian labour historiography. The first phase until 1918, focused on the moral degradation of the urban poor and attempted to identify the conditions to improve their lives. The second phase continued from 1920-1950, which was shaped by communist influence in trade unions and anti-imperialist struggles. 1950-1960 observed modernisation and development as essential needs for industrialisation. They described radical labour history as an outcome of the conflict of trade unions with the modern institutions and social control of leaders. The last phase started in late 1970, which was deeply shaped by the changed socio-political situation with peasant insurgency and the emergence of subaltern studies. This historiography looked deeply into the material conditions of the working-class and positioned them within the broader political imageries (Chandavarkar, 1997). However, Chandavarkar (1998) is quite critical about the Marxist as well as the subaltern traditions of Indian historiography. His discomfort lies with the structural construction of class consciousness and treating the working-class as a homogeneous category. He calls this as deterministic theorisation. Chandavarkar's (1998) contribution to labour historiography is essential for two

reasons. Firstly, his construction of the Indian working-class as a non-homogeneous sociological category instead of an economical category based on production relations. Secondly, by situating working-class politics within the broader political imageries, Chandavarkar shows how urban neighbourhoods played an important part in shaping labour politics at the shop floor and vice versa. However, Chandavarkar's critique about subaltern studies for an overemphasis on class in working-class history is problematic. Chakrabarty's (1981) work on communal riots in Bengal's jute mill shows how religious relations were also forged into working-class solidarity as well as antagonisms (Chakrabarty, 1981).

Following Chandavarkar's (1998) formulation of the Indian working-class, it is essential to unpack how social relations at the workplace and social organisations in the neighbourhood were part of the class formation in the Indian working class. Firstly, class consciousness was hindered because of the inseparable ties of caste, religion and other loyalties (village identity). These ties determined neighbourhood social organisations and solidarities. Secondly, neighbourhoods were also sites of everyday difference and antagonisms which were forged into shop floor relations. Thirdly, different power relations existed in neighbourhood and shop floors which cannot be only understood through production relations. These power relations were based on religions, outsider (rural migrants), gender etc. Sarkar's work

(1984) shows how single, migrant women's political participation was dependent on their male protectors (Sarkar, 1984). These show how social consciousness shaped the political domain of the working class. As Chandavarkar (1998) states, "The solidarities were not the natural outcome of popular culture or a reflex of the specific character of production relations, but, rather, they were politically constituted, and as



*Figure 10 'Hortal' by
Chittaprasad Bhattacharjee
(1961) in printmaking*

such they were contingent, sometimes transient and even evanescent” (Chandavarkar, 1998: 9). This clearly shows two things about the complex nature of working-class politics. Firstly, working-class politics is not devoid of different socio-spatial relations and can be fully understood by mapping different power relations associated with broader political imageries. Secondly, in the everyday politics of labour, neighbourhood is very much related to the making and unmaking of working-class politics. In the later section, this is unpacked with the empirics from Loomtex jute mill worker’s movement. Jute mill politics are not an exception from this working-class politics. The next section elaborates the historiography of Indian jute mills.

5.2.2 History of Indian Jute Mills

Jute mills in the Indian context represent a unique example of primitive accumulation. The history of the jute industry in India demonstrates this unique nature of capitalism. Jute as fibre was largely used in South Asia as early as the sixteenth century. Jute was mentioned in several pieces of early literature of that period. However, the industrial production of jute started in 1855 with the establishment of the first firm in Kolkata (Sethia, 1996). This was soon after the establishment of mechanised jute mills in Dundee in 1850. The development of Dundee as ‘juteopolis’ was predominantly dependent on the export of raw jute from the ‘the then colony’ India. This also re-establishes Chakraborty’s (2010) argument of History 2 being the constitutive part of history 1’s capitalism. The Indian jute mill experience showcases a complex case of postcolonial capitalism. Although a majority of the jute mills in India was established by Scotsmen, the share of Scotsmen owning mills started declining from the late 19th century. During that time many Indian entrepreneurs started investing in jute industry for short-term benefit and hence compensated their loss in other industries (Sethia, 1996). This also shows frequent ownership change of jute mills. The tradition continues until today. The Roster of Calcutta Baled Jute Association shows that in 1903-04 out of 133 mills 70 were owned by Indians, which rose up to 63% in 1918-19 (Goswami, 1982). This period also experienced a curious case of capitalism where Indian jute production exceeded Dundee’s production, and gradually India became the leading country in jute production and exports. British managing houses based in India played an important role in monopolising capital exploitation network because of the availability of cheap labour and long working hours of Indian labourers in jute industries (Sethia, 1996). This shows a unique characteristic of primitive accumulation of

postcolonial capital where colonisers became an inherent component to flourish the colony's capital accumulation. In this case 'becoming' does not become a precondition of 'being' rather 'becoming' becomes a constitutive part of reshaping 'being' of capital. Simultaneously, the jute industry in India does not represent enclaves of European capital accumulation because of the increasing participation of Indian owners. It necessarily shows a character of collaborations and conflicts among Indian and European capitalists (Goswami, 1982). In 1884, Indian Jute Mill Association (IJMA) was formed in Kolkata as a response to the increasing number of new mills to prevent fall in the profit margins. IJMA brought certain restrictions on the participation and amount of production among the jute mills, which Goswami (1982) calls an attempt to maintain indirect oligopoly.

The labour market of jute industry became volatile after the 1890's plague in Kolkata. British managing houses managed the labour supply by bringing migrant labour population from rural Bihar and the surrounding states to Bengal. Later on, this immigration of labourers from surrounding regions created an abundance of labourers which further lowered the wage rate as well as the bargaining capacity of the jute mill labourers. This migration of labourers also brought certain complex dynamics to the jute industry of Bengal. Firstly, it created a unique classification of labour which Basu (2008) defines as colonial oxymoron 'peasant worker'. These labourers were not completely divorced from the rural society. A study shows most of the migrant labours used to be absent from April- June to participate in the peak season of agriculture in their rural origins (Mitra, 1981). This circular migration also shaped the social relations and materialities of space by bringing rural cosmopolitanism (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, 2003). Secondly, the participation of peasant workers' in jute industries of Bengal created a heterogeneous composition of the labour market. This heterogeneity resulted in both solidarity and conflict among workers (Basu, 2008). 1895's riot in Kankinara jute mill among Hindu and Muslim workers demonstrates that conflict (Chakrabarty, 1983). Simultaneously a series of worker's strikes during 1920-1938 brought a complicated dimension of labour politics in jute mills (Basu, 2008). This complex labour politics was often represented by 'community consciousness' instead of a 'class consciousness' among workers (Chakrabarty, 1988) where community ties supersede the class identity for construction of solidarity. Gradually from 1980, the production decreased in the jute industry, particularly because of

competition from other fibres in the global market. In 1993, the Board of Industrial & Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) declared jute a sick industry (Ministry of Textiles, no date).

5.2.3 Genealogy of Conflict Politics in Jute Mills of Bengal

Jute Mills of India particularly those are in Kolkata known for its radical and sometimes violent labour politics. Chakraborty (1983) mentions a series of violent labour movements in 1895 in different mills of Kolkata. 1920-21, 1929 and 1937-38 also observed a series of strikes in the industries of Kolkata where jute mill strikes were also an important component of that (Basu, 2010). The first trade union in jute mills were formed in Kankaria jute mill in 1895 as Mohamedan Association (Chandavarkar, 1998). This union were formed to safeguard the interest of Muslim workers and renovation of a mosque. It clearly indicates how working-class sectionalism was capitalised to form worker's solidarity and to organise them. Almost two decades later in 1927, the Bengal Jute Worker's Union was formed, which was later known as Bengal Chatkal Majdoor Union (Mitra, 1981). The trade union movement was also linked with the Swadeshi (Freedom) movement of that time. The heterogeneity of the worker's groups, unprecedented exploitation of mill workers and involvement of British managerial houses have shaped the radical labour politics of jute mills. Later on, in the mid-20th-century involvement of Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU) affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has also contributed to this radical politics. 1974-79 also observed three major strikes and almost regular protest and political militancy (Gooptu, 2007). The involvement of communist party largely shaped post-1970's trade union movement and directed towards achieving revolutionary objectives. The influence of the Naxalite movement (framed by Mao Tse Tung's political ideology) and peasant insurgency were also important to shape these revolutionary objectives. This period also observed changed narrative of worker's demand where the demands extended beyond wage rate or livelihood more towards entitlement rights and challenging the exploitation (Gooptu, 2007).

The involvement of CITU in jute mill politics cannot be analysed in a unilinear way. One-way CITU's involvement shaped organised trade union politics in Bengal through its grassroots mobilisation and radical practices of strikes. On the other hand, CITU often collaborated with the state (Communist Party of India (Marxist) led government)

and its apparatus (police) in worker's exploitation. This is exemplified in the Bhikari Paswan incident of 1993. Bhikari Paswan was a casual worker in Victoria Jute Mill. Workers of Victoria Jute Mill were protesting against low wage rate and non-payment of worker's benefit, including provident fund. As trade unions of that time did not pay much attention to worker's demand, the workers attacked some of the union leaders, which was followed by the arrest of several workers. Workers assembled at the local police station and demanded the release of arrested people which further led to a scuffle between police and workers. Later on, allegedly, Bhikari Paswan was abducted by the state police and went missing (Roy, 1995). A writ petition was also filed in Calcutta High Court by his father. This incident was followed by massive labour unrest and finally led to the death of a policeman. The state didn't take any initiative to solve the mysterious disappearance of Bhikari Paswan. Various civil liberties group and the then opposition Congress got involved in the worker's demand (Indian Today, 1995). This particular incident put a political dent in Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s unprecedented dominance which was observed in the loss of several seats in the next municipal election. The same year workers of Kanoria Jute Mill formed an autonomous non-party trade union called 'Sangrami Shramik Union'. Kanoria becomes a watershed moment in radical politics of jute mills. The mill experienced sporadic lockouts and closure because of non-payment of PF and other worker's benefits. In 1993 after forming of 'Sangrami Shramik Union' first the worker's went on strike for their demands. About a month later, they took over the closed mill and established their right to work and started running the mill as a cooperative (Davala, 1996; Gooptu, 2007). The Kanoria movement continued till 1998. This movement caught much attention from civil society where they culturally participated in worker's movement by the performance of music, street acts etc. The Kanoria movement offered a new path of the labour movement for two reasons. Firstly, it changed the 'self-destructive' militancy tendency that Victoria movement observed. Secondly, it also established the need for non-party autonomous movements in the context of jute mills. The Kanoria movement also shaped the radical politics of the jute mills in the coming years. 'Sangrami Shramik Union' paved the way for the formation of the non-party autonomous trade unions in other jute mills. Loomtex's labour politics was also shaped by Kanoria where the circulation of actors, infrastructure and networks can be observed.

The involvement of trade unions in mill politics requires further analysis as historically often existed as open-ended socio-spatial organisations. As Chandavarkar (1998) states, “Trade unions existed often as a loose superstructure constructed over an active undergrowth of informal organization and seemingly spontaneous industrial action” (Chandavarkar, 1998: 74). Trade union politics in the mills of India developed through two contradictory forces. On the one hand, it voiced demands about worker’s rights and challenged the exploitative authorities. On the other hand, almost all of them were part of one of the major political parties, and often aligned themselves to mill managements for patronage. This patronage was also capitalised for mass electoral mobilisation (Gooptu, 2007). This is why the labour politics in mills were never linear in terms of strategies. It ranges from collective bargaining, clientelism to violence, strikes, lockouts and other radical strategies. Another important factor which played a major role in the jut mill politics was the involvement of jobbers or ‘*sardari*’ system. The jobbers were responsible for recruitment as well as controlling the labours. They acted as an intermediary between the mill owners and the workers. They also distanced themselves from involvement with trade unions. They used to recruit workers by capitalising on social, linguistic and other cultural ties (Chandavarkar 1998). Gooptu (2007) argues that a 1969-70 study in jute mill shows that workers benefitted from progressive labour legislation and abolishment of jobbers. However, this may not be the case as my empirics from Loomtex mill shows trade union leaders and local tyrants replaced the role of clientelism or brokerage by jobbers. Instead of being institutionalised now, the practices operate more through informal political networks.

5.2.4 Labour Demography and Migration History in Loomtex Mill

In the Jute industry of Kolkata community and family ties are usually essential to gain employment (Fernandes, 1998). Because of this social capital, jute mill politics are always a reflection of community consciousness (Chakrabarty, 1988). In relation to the Loomtex mill, the migration of unskilled labourers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar started in 1980. All the respondents mention the presence of a relative or a village acquaintance in the mill motivated them to join the mill. When I asked about his reason from migrating from Bihar, worker Satish answers

“Everyone needs employment. In our village, we never had that opportunity. Except for cultivation, there was no other option. As our relatives were working here, so we came here in search of work. We wanted some employment opportunity”.

The interview suggests that during the late 1980s, the jute mills were also pivotal to absorb unskilled labourers.

Me: *I want to know those people who migrated, why they opted for jute mill. Was it a tradition?*

Bimal: *It was not a tradition. People opted for jute mill because jute mill can accommodate illiterate people also. Earlier it was the case. Now, even in jute mills, they want people with at least a basic level of education.*

This migration of labourer also brought certain complex dynamics to the jute industry of Bengal. Firstly, this creates a unique classification of labour which Basu (2008) defines as colonial oxymoron ‘peasant worker’. These labourers were not completely divorced from the rural society. The labourers identify profit maximisation through increasing workload on labourers as a major reason for declining employment opportunities in Loomtex mill. This is coupled with non-sanction of Provident Funds (PF)⁸ and gratuity, which also disinterest people to join jute mills. The workforce of 5000-6000 workers in 1980 has declined to 2500-3000 in recent years.

There are 8-10 categories of labour in Loomtex where almost all workers are in a temporary contract. The minimum wage in the mill is approximately Rs. 450-475/day (equivalent to £ 5.5-6.0). The workers also get an Employees' State Insurance (ESI) card for availing health facilities at labour hospitals. Only 500-1000 quarters are provided for the workers, which also shapes the patronage politics of the mill area. Currently, 14 trade unions are operating in the mill where some are affiliated to mainstream political parties. The major labour issues are related to non-sanction of PF's and gratuity and sporadic violence within the mill and the surrounding area. However, they also claim that better wage and housing facility are not their immediate demand.

⁸ Provident fund's purpose is to provide employees a lump sum amount including self and employer's contribution with interest on both, on retirement. Here, employee has to pay a certain contribution towards the scheme and an equal contribution is paid by the employer.

5.2.5 Chronology of Conflict Politics at Loomtex

Loomtex jute mill, popularly, also known as *Titagarh* Mill, is located in the *Barrackpur* industrial area. The entire mill area, along with its influence area (worker's colony) is roughly about one sq. km. The area demographically exhibits the heterogeneity of workers who are predominantly non-Bengali speaking, and the majority of them are Muslim. There is also a spatial stigma which is associated with this area locally being a lower and lower-middle-class area of non-Hindu and non-Bengali speaking community. Colloquially a contingent form of outsidersness is associated with this area (ibid 4.5.1). This also has an impact on the land rent as this area comparatively has lower land rent than the surrounding areas.

It was owned by Britishers during the colonial time which was given out on lease after independence. The mill predates many of the other jute mills in this area. Chakraborty (1983) mentions the outbreak of violent labour movement in *Titagarh* mill in 1895. The contemporary labour politics in the mill started in 1980. Disagreement with the management on worker's benefit led to a lockout of the mill for 18 months. In 1986 the ownership of *Titagarh* mill changed to Loomtex company (British owned). Loomtex stayed in business till 1990. Again, in 1990 the mill was leased out to a Marwari owner. During the Kanoria' movement in 1993 (ibid 126) many mill workers supported Kanoria, and the actors involved in Kanoria helped to form radical politics at Loomtex. A massive rail blockade was observed during that time. Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star a lesser-known fraction of Naxalist party, started mobilisation among workers from 2005 to resist a voluntary retirement scheme and downsizing of the mills by the central government in National Jute Mill Association owned mills. This movement continued till 2007 when finally, the voluntary retirement scheme was implemented. However, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star (CPIML Red Star) claims partial success for the movement as the government was forced to pay salary to the workers during the two-year long (2005-07) strike. This movement was helpful for them to build trust among mill workers in that area. In 2007, a worker of Loomtex mill Laksman mobilised workers to demand their due PF and gratuity. The trade unions of the mill dominated by CITU started threatening workers and Laksman. Management also wanted to negotiate with Laksman by bribing him which he finally leaked among workers and put a poster in the mill compound. After few days Laksman along with two workers was 'gate bahar' by the management and

attacked by outside goons⁹. Immediately after this Laksman was arrested by the police for a false rape charge against him. This has fuelled massive labour unrest. CPIML Red Star started mobilising workers and hold daily meetings at the mill gate. By that time, CPIML Red Star mobilised workers to form an autonomous non-party trade union called *Sangrami Majdoor Union*. Overnight *Sangrami Majdoor Union* received massive support from the workers where approximately 60% of the workers became members of *Sangrami Majdoor Union*. In one such occasion, on 15th May of 2008, the meeting was attacked by the goons, and the mill manager was allegedly murdered inside the mill. This led to massive state violence on workers by arresting 17 mill workers, two political workers and with mill closure for four months. The movement continued, and CPIML Red Star continued legal fight for the arrested workers and also continued mobilisation of workers. Finally, in August 2008, the arrested people were granted bail. It is still not clear who has murdered the mill manager. Some newspapers alleged that the union was responsible for the murder whereas *Sangrami Majdoor Union* always denied these allegations and blamed outside goons for the murder. Granting bail and final release of arrested people also shows that no significant evidence was found against the union for the murder.

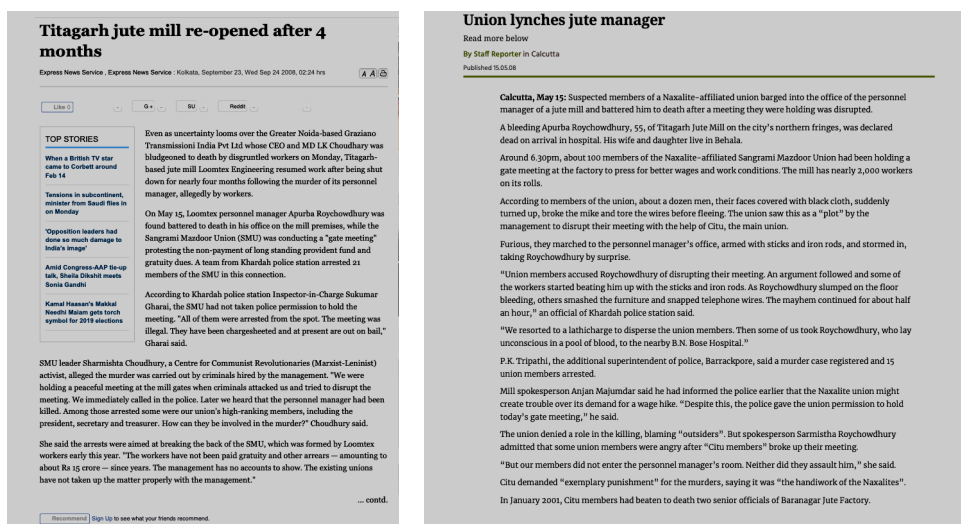


Figure 11 Newspaper Coverage of Mill Manager Murder Incident

The resistance became more structured and organised through the Sangrami Majdoor Union. The workers continued to protest for their demands. Finally, in December 2009,

⁹ Local gang members

negotiations started between all unions, including the Sangrami Majdoor Union and the mill management with the facilitation Sub-Divisional Officer¹⁰ (S.D.O) (Das, 2010). Sangrami Majdoor Union demanded that proper documentation related to P.F should be done within seven days, and the gratuity be released for all workers within a year time. The management refused to act on these demands. The workers continued their movement by blocking the transportation of any manufactured products from the mill compound. Finally, in 2010, the management agreed on the following issues as mentioned in the Sanhati published by CPIML (Red Star).

- a) 80 workers will be given gratuity each month for one year, starting in December
- b) All PF related documents will be submitted within 25 days, and all related problems have to solved within that time frame
- c) Money given for S.T.L (rule for getting 14 days holiday for working 240 days) will be doubled. (Das, 2010)

However, after releasing some worker's gratuity, the management violated the agreement and tried to break the worker's unity. This resulted in further labour conflict. In response to my question about the violation of the agreement CPIML (Red Star) political worker and community mobiliser, Subhas tells,

"The agreement was to give the gratuity to 80 people every month. That makes yearly, nearly 960 people. But after giving it to 300-350 people, they violated the agreement. So again, the movement started for violating the agreement. Other unions again started working on behalf of the owner. There were again conflicts within the management. Someone stopped the delivery of products. We were not involved in this problem. We said if the products are not delivered, then it would be stocked. T.M.C. union did this. We were not supportive of this".

¹⁰ Sub-Divisional Officer is the head official for a district subdivision.

The statement from Subhas and discussion with other members from Sangrami Majdoor Union suggest that the management was successfully capable of breaking the worker's unity. Allegedly one prominent member from Sangrami Majdoor Union was bribed and promoted to a higher position. This shows how conflict politics at Loomtex is shaped by promises, violation of promises and betrayal. In 2016 again, the ownership changed, and the new owner attempted to negotiate with Sangrami Majdoor Union and also partially released some of the due payments. After a few months, the situation again deteriorated, and sporadic violence and subsequent labour movement started.

2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laksman mobilized workers and demanded due P.F and gratuity • Laksman was arrested and intensified labour unrest • Further arrest of workers • Sangrami Majdoor Union formed
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sangrami Majdoor Union started agitations for clearing the dues in organized way
May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goons attacked a peaceful gate meeting organised by Sangrami Majdoor Union • Mill Manager was killed inside the mill premises • Arrest of 17 mill workers and 2 political workers in murder charge
August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrested workers received bails • Increased pressure on management for their demands
October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers further blocked the mill entrance to restrict movement of any goods
December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations from the management started by facilitation of S.D.O
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management agreed to fulfil some of the workers demand • Labour movement slowed its pace
2010- 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial fulfilment of the promises made by the management • Change of mill ownership
2016- Current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporadic violence • Sporadic labour unrest

Figure 12 Chronology of Labour Movement at Loomtex Mill

5.2.6 Conflict Politics at Loomtex Mill

The chronology of the events at Loomtex mill shows that the conflict politics at the mill started with non-payment of P.F. and gratuity. Every month, the P.F. amount gets deducted from worker's wages, but the management failed to furnish proper

documentation that the money is getting deposited in the worker's account. When Laksman, a worker, tried to raise a concern about this and mobilised some workers, the management felt threatened. As per the worker's statement, regarding the non-payment of worker's due, the management argued about the non-profitability of the business and lack of demands whereas the workers questioned that argument by pointing out increasing working hours and acquisition of new mills by the management. When asked about the production, mill worker Satish replies,

"Initially, there was no pressure on the labourers. One labourer used to run one loom. Now one labourer runs two looms. Initially, the production was Eight kilos/loom, but it is now 24 kilos/loom. Still, they say they have less production."

Another worker Bimal says,

"If the demand is low, why they want to increase production. If the business is not profitable, then why the same owner acquired four other mills. They just don't want to clear worker's due".

This shows that the workers were sceptical from the beginning about the management's justification. When Laksman tried to mobilise workers, they eagerly joined him as they were looking for someone who could take their issue forward.

The operationalisation of conflict politics by the workers includes heterogeneous practices. The selection of methods is dependent on the objective and targeted impact. When asked about the selection process, the community mobiliser and trade union leader of Sangrami Majdoor Union Nazeeb replies:

"It's not a personal decision. First, we conduct a meeting where we discuss this among everyone. Whatever is decided in the meeting, we follow accordingly. Secondly, it is a step by step process. Say, for example, we discuss in the general meeting that we are going to submit letters to every department. If we see the impact is not high just by submitting the letters, then we do 'gate meeting'. If we realise the gate meeting is not very successful, then we keep a demonstration event for 48-72 hours. This is how we select. If the demonstration doesn't work out well, we call for market bandh. If market bandh is not working, we go for B.T. Road bandh or rail strike. This is how we take it forward".

This not only signifies that conflict politics constitute strategic choices of various options, not impromptu solutions and also conflict politics operates as a sequential

process. In their study of Chennai slum dweller's politics to claim rights Mahadevan & Ijlal (2017) identify four strategies. These strategies are: a) Informal-antagonistic: strike, blockades, occupy space b) Informal-transactional: clientelism c) Formal-antagonistic: Public Interest Litigations against state d) Formal transactional: Lobbying at state-level bureaucracy (Mahadevan and Ijlal, 2017). In the context of the subaltern political activity, Featherstone (2008) states "This is an account of the political that bears on the negotiation of heterogeneous associations, associations that bring together humans and non-humans through different strategic arrangements" (Featherstone, 2008: 6).

The same applies to conflict politics at Loomtex Mill. When asked about the methods for conflict politics CPIML (Red Star) leader, Sharmila replies,

"It is never a predetermined thing. We need to see what method works best for that moment". We also need to consider what resources we have to operationalise that method".

In response to my question about direct antagonism, she adds,

"Direct antagonism could be our last resort. Any form of violence is not productive. However, we would also not be a mere spectator if violence is used against us.When the mill manager was killed inside the mill, the Maoist fraction suggested us to get into a direct confrontation with the goons. We knew that would lead to a bloodbath. So, we didn't involve in that provocation".

Community mobiliser and political worker of CPIML (Red Star) Subhas also reiterates the fact that CPIML (Red Star)'s politics never involve falling into the trap of provocation. He states,

"The Maoist asked us to join them; we would fight. But we refused to go. Then they also became calm because they wouldn't go alone. This is how we are different from them. Anyway, we immediately called the police station".

The above statements from Sharmila and Subhas highlight that direct antagonism is not the only way to practice conflict politics. Sometimes it includes formal transactional methods by involving administrative bodies like the police in the process. Here, it is also important to highlight the dynamism and flexibility of practices of conflict politics. While discussing the incident of the murder of the mill manager Subhas states,

“We started our meeting after taking permission. Usually, at 4:30 pm, people enter the factory, and previous shift people leave the factory at 5 pm. So, we selected that time for the meeting. Suddenly, there was an attack on the meeting. The gate was all open. Some workers went inside. Those who were inside also came outside. Then they attacked us. We were in a van with a mic. Sharmila was giving her speech at that time. Alok, Shiv and I were there. Then they ‘lathicharged’¹¹ the mob”.

So, it shows that initially Sangrami Majdoor Union adopted the method of ‘gate meeting’ for the purpose of mobilisation of workers. Then after the attack, they immediately changed their strategy to follow the legal process by involving the police. Simultaneously, also to showcase that they were not intimidated by the attack, they mobilised 200-300 people and marched to the police station. This shows on a same day three different strategies were adopted to practice conflict politics. where the selection of methods is context dependent. Based on the discussion with the Sangrami Majdoor Union leaders and CPIML (Red Star) leadership and political workers, this research develops typologies of conflict politics. The typologies are the following:

A) Fetishization of law: People at the margins of the state use the same legal apparatus to counter hegemonic appropriation of power which are used for exploitation. Here people at the margins believe the law has a supernatural ability to serve their objectives (Das, 2004; Datta, 2013). The modes include the filing of First Information Reports (FIRs) to police to complain about violence; Right to Information (RTIs) queries to different departments of the government and also the submission of petition letters to the ministries.

In the case of Loomtex mill movement, initially, the police arrested Laksman in a false case after the instruction from the management. Even Subhas claimed that the police said they can’t do anything about Laksman’s arrest despite knowing he is not guilty. Simultaneously, when their meeting was attacked, and the manager was murdered, they called the police station and lodged complaints against the management. About that incident, Subhas states

¹¹ Baton Charge which is a coordinated tactic for dispersing crowds of people, usually used by police or military during public order situations.

“Anyway, we immediately called the police station. They sent the police force. Then the police asked us to continue the meeting. However, we didn’t have any equipment left at that time. We asked to arrest the management. They said they can’t do that”.

Soon after this, the police again arrested 17 mill workers and two political workers for the charge of murder. After this arrest, they fought the case legally in the court and finally, the arrested people were acquitted from all the cases after spending 77 days in the jail. The interview with Sangrami Union leader Nazeem suggests they have also filed RTI’s for the P.F. irregularities. He states,

“Whatever we can do legally, we are doing that. We have submitted an RTI. The way they have made gate bahar of these eight people, we are a sending letter for that too”.

B) Ordinary Spaces of negotiations: Negotiation strategies between the workers and the state often blurs the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate. At the end of 2015, Sangrami Majdoor Union negotiated with the new management with the hope of the release of non-paid worker’s benefit. However, when those ‘broken promises’ by the management was not fulfilled, they again adopted direct antagonism. The community mobiliser and CPIML (Red Star) leader Subhas states,

“The agreement was to give the gratuity to 80 people every month. So, in a year, nearly 960 people. We also said we would not do any gherao. However, after giving it to 300-350 people, they violated the agreement. So again, the movement started for violating the agreement”.

The details of the negotiations are discussed previously (ibid, 131). This statement from Subhas highlights that negotiations become an essential strategy as part of conflict politics. Here, negotiation not only enables them to put forward their demands but also helps them to judge their capacity of bargaining within the networks of power. Here, ‘Ordinary spaces of negotiation’ establishes “On one hand, the violence of the state indicates a kind of abstract sovereign power; on the other hand, there are moments of compromise that enable people to make morally infused demands on the state that exceed a proceduralist regime” (Anjaria, 2011: 68).

C) Mobilisation and Outreach: Sangrami Majdoor union leaders express that success and outcome of conflict politics depend on mobilisation and outreach. This

becomes an important tool for operationalisation of demands and creating a solidarity network to pressurise the owners or the state. Mobilisation and outreach happen through different mechanisms. In the beginning, they identify two to three resource persons from each department who try to mobilise 20-25 more people from each department. They also adopt public meetings and distribution of leaflets to reach people beyond the shop floor. This social capital helps for conducting rallies, gherao¹² of police station etc. To answer whether they involve neighbourhood population in the mill politics Sangrami Union leader Nazeem says,

“Yes. We also involve them by informing over the mic. We do outreach in the entire area. By this, we can inform others also about the worker’s problem”.

This shows that the conflict politics of the mill is dependent on the neighbourhood population for mobilisation and outreach. Simultaneously, most of the times when I entered in the mill area for my fieldwork, I found Lakshman was always busy with the processing of Aadhar card¹³ for the mill neighbourhood population. Even, the neighbourhood people often ask Laksman if they need any documentation from the councillor. Here, Laksman acts as a power broker between the neighbourhood population and administrative bodies. Because of his leadership in mobilising workers and involvement in the conflict politics, the neighbourhood population perceives Laksman has better ability to navigate across power networks for their everyday demands. This clearly shows that the mill politics and neighbourhood politics are inseparable. Further details of the mill politics and neighbourhood politics will be discussed in the next chapter.

D) Direct Antagonism: Sharmila’s statement (ibid. 134) about direct antagonism shows that Sangrami Majdoor Union has no inhibitions against using direct antagonism, but it depends on the objective and context. At Loomtex mill, the direct antagonism strategies include hunger strike, road/rail blockade, lockouts of the mill. Interviews suggest radical politics are only used when other practices fail. Based on

¹² Gherao is a form of protest in which workers prevent employers leaving a place of work until certain demands are met

¹³ Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique identity number that can be obtained voluntarily by residents or passport holders of India, based on their biometric and demographic data.

the ethnographic fieldwork, the research identifies how different stages of radical politics has specific objectives and how the intensity of it also depends on the spatial scale. When a worker suddenly died while working, union leaders were involved in direct confrontation with the management demanding for adequate compensation. While describing the incident, the union leader Nazeem says,

“When the management tried to bring the body outside the mill compound, to avoid the compensation amount We went there and saw the car was standing at the main road. We saw the union leader from T.M.C. was sitting inside the car. Nobody was courageous enough to say the worker who died inside; they can’t take his body out. Then we went there and stopped the car. He also threatened me that I have to take responsibility for this. I said, yes, I would take. Then the labour officer asked me whether I know from where to get the benefit. I said yes, I know that. Then we turned the car back to the mill, and slowly the workers also gathered around the car. Finally, we managed to get the compensation amount for him as he died while working”.

Here, direct antagonism operates at the shop floor level. Simultaneously, for the demand of their unsanctioned P.F. and gratuity, they wanted to highlight the worker’s rights and orchestrated hunger strike, road blockage to reach broader political imagination.

For the selection of direct antagonism strategy, political Worker Subhas describes,

“Of course, it is like that. One more thing is that we understand strike or blockade can only be practised after reaching certain levels. It’s a gradual process. When other practices are not working then only, we can try those. That’s why, when there was an 11.5 hrs rail strike, the police can’t assault us”.

The discussion with the union leaders and CPIML (Red Star) leadership constructs direct antagonism as a sequential process and operates at various spatial scales with specific objectives. The table below (Table 7) explains the mode and objectives of this strategy at various spatial scales.

Table 7 Stages of Direct Antagonism at Loomtex Mill

Stages	Objective	Mode	Impact on Spatial Scale
Stage 1	Voicing demands	Petition letter submission, <i>gherao</i>	Shop floor
Stage 2	Outreach and mobilisation	Gate Meeting	Shop floor
Stage 3	Creating pressure	Demonstration for 48-72 hrs.	Neighbourhood
Stage 4	Intensify pressure and seeking solidarity	Market <i>bandh</i> (closure of market)	Locale
Stage 5	Final mode to exert pressure, seeking solidarity, publicise demands through media	Rail/ Road blockade	City

It is evident from the above table that the intensification of methods is directly dependent on the impacts at increased spatial scale. Selection of modes depending on the spatial scale enables people at the margins to publicise their rights, greater mobilisation, and finally creates a pressure network for fulfilling their claims.

5.2.7 Multiple Strategies of Containment by the Mill Owners

The mill owners adopted various strategies to counter worker's agitation together with the state apparatus. There are five ways through which they attempt to curb worker's movement.

A) Shop- floor politics: This includes temporary closure of mill without any proper reasons and also frequent 'gate bahar' of workers who are associated with the movement.

The figure shows the notice that was put on the mill gate on 07/01/2018 where the management instructed the gate bahar of eight workers. The reasons mentioned for this were: gossiping; leaving the working place without permission; leaving the department before red light; moving here and there and keeping machines idle; assembling in front of the exit gate before finishing work. From the narrative of the notice, it is clearly

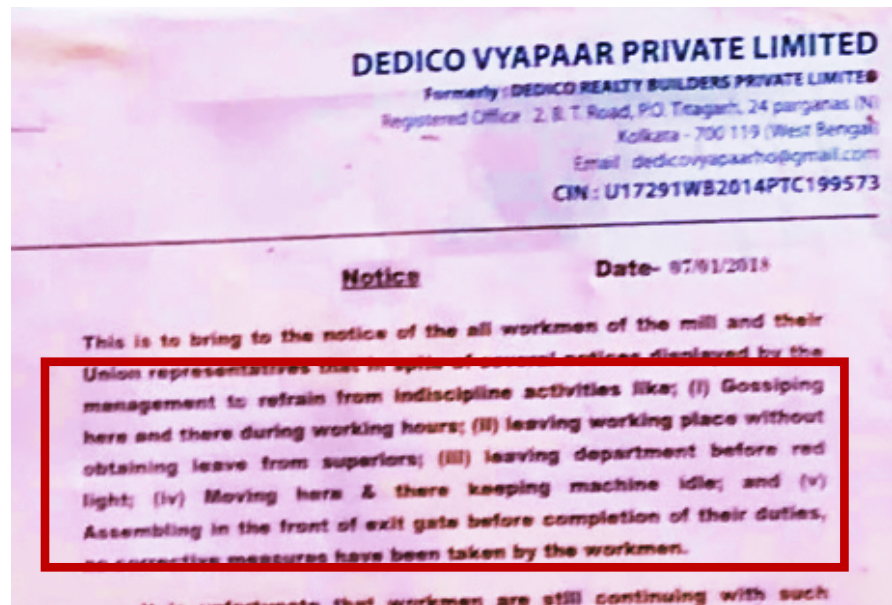


Figure 13 Notice of Gate Bahar by Mill Management

understood that the allegations are fabricated and 'gate bahar' is used to intimidate workers and impose discipline as a form of domination.

B) Fetishization of law: The mill owners often use the law to frame false cases and police arrest workers to curb any resistance. Here the law serves a supernatural ability to counter worker's movement. The mill management used the law to intimidate workers and framed false charges against them. First, they orchestrated Laksman's arrest. Then after the murder of the mill manager, they filed murder charges against Sangrami Majdoor Union which resulted in the arrest of 17 mill workers and two political workers. By referring to his informal conversation with the Officer-in-Charge (O.C.) of the local police station, Subhas says,

"I asked him why you have arrested Laksman. You know that he is innocent. The O.C. replied we know everything. But you know our hands are tied. We can't do anything".

It was not possible to verify the validity of this statement with the Officer-in-Charge. However, the acquittal of Laksman and other arrested people suggests that the police was unable to produce substantial pieces of evidence for those criminal charges.

C) Counter from Inside: Out of a total of 14 trade unions, the owners often provide 'hush money' to at least 10 unions not to participate in any labour movement. The trade unions are also often inactive in raising worker's demands. In a recent case, the mill owners even attempt to create a trade union with the help of the ruling party to serve the owner's interest. The management also tried to bribe prominent leaders to curtail conflict politics. In some cases, they were successful, whereas in other cases, they failed. When Laksman started mobilising workers at the beginning, they offered him promotion and a bribe. To describe the incident political worker Subhas states,

"They reached out to Laksham and wanted to bribe him. He is a general worker, but they offered him the post of a supervisor. They wanted to control him. As per his statement, they offered him Rs. 2 lakhs also. I am not sure whether they would give that money or not".

But in another case, without naming the person, Laksman discloses in the interview that the management bought one of the prominent leaders of the Sangrami Majdoor Union in 2016. He also expresses this has weakened the movement.

The above discussion shows various forms of relationships that exist in the Loomtex mill movement. Here, the state is not directly involved in the process. However, the state supports the mill owners, and hence mill owners act as an extended apparatus of the state. The next section shows the typologies of conflict politics in the Salt Lake eviction case.

5.3 Analysis of Conflict Politics- Urban Margin 2- Bourgeois environmentalism- Anti Eviction Movement in Salt Lake Squatter Settlement

5.3.1 History of Planned City Salt Lake

Salt Lake was developed as a satellite township adjacent to Kolkata during the 1970s by reclaiming land from Salt Lake. The area was developed by following the modern town planning model of the garden city. The objective was to create a "humane and healthy environment, which would operate just like garden city" (Rumbach, 2017: 786).



Figure 14 Salt Lake Area with Identified Case Study Squatters

Initially, Salt Lake was attempted to accommodate the post-partition ‘refugee’ influx from Bangladesh. From the late 1980s, the political economy of the area started changing. Salt Lake started flourishing as an alternative nucleus of the Central Business District (CBD) of Kolkata. This was coupled with the growth of the IT industry, and Salt Lake became a prime location for many IT companies along with several government offices. This also helped the flourishing informal economy in Salt Lake for construction workers, hawkers, household helps and drivers. Present-day Salt Lake is dominated by gated communities, comparatively well-maintained streets and urban amenities. This area is now predominantly made up of an upper-middle-class and middle-class population¹⁴. This area is also a preferred choice for many bureaucrats, retired judges and other high ranked government officials. The land ownership lies with the urban development department of the West Bengal state where they lease out or allot plot as per requirement.

¹⁴ As per McKinsey report (2007) Indian middle class comprises of two segments: seekers and strivers. Seekers are with real annual household disposable incomes of 200,000 to 500,000 Indian rupees (\$4,380 to \$10,940) and strivers are with 500,000 to 1,000,000 Indian rupees (\$10,940 to \$21,890). Globals (upper class) are beyond this threshold income. (Ablett et al., 2007)

There is a complete absence of any notified slums in this area as the state government is never willing to institutionalise ‘informal settlements’. The informal settlements exist as squatter settlements which are commonly known as ‘juggi jhopdi’. Squatter settlements are also not addressed in the state or central government’s policy documents which further makes them vulnerable to evictions. The fieldwork suggests that Salt Lake has approximately 15-20 squatter settlements with varied size ranges from 15 families to 150 families. The female labour force of squatters provides domestic help to the houses of the Salt Lake area. The male labour force is engaged in hawking, involvement in paratransit transportation modes, casual construction worker, mechanics and small shop owners. The squatter dwellers are mostly migrants to the city from the village areas of the state, and surrounding states and also some of them are ‘illegal’ migrants from the neighbouring country Bangladesh.

5.3.2 Chronology of Events in Salt Lake Eviction

October 2017- Evictions started in the name of conducting the FIFA U-17 World Cup of 2017. Initially, approximately 200 people (including hawkers) were evicted by the *Bidhannagar* Municipal Corporation without serving any notice or providing any rehabilitation. Multiple Hawker unions (also including the hawker union of the ruling party) gave a deputation to the Mayor and also conducted an anti-eviction procession. A lesser-known political organisation (Party of Democratic Socialism) and some student organisations were involved in the mobilisation of squatter dwellers against the eviction.

The Citizen’s Forum of Salt Lake (founded by a retired judge) campaigned in support of eviction for ‘Clean and Green Salt Lake’. They conducted a series of meetings with Mayor and also submitted a Detailed Project Report to make Salt Lake ‘liveable’.

November 2017-
Committees were formed

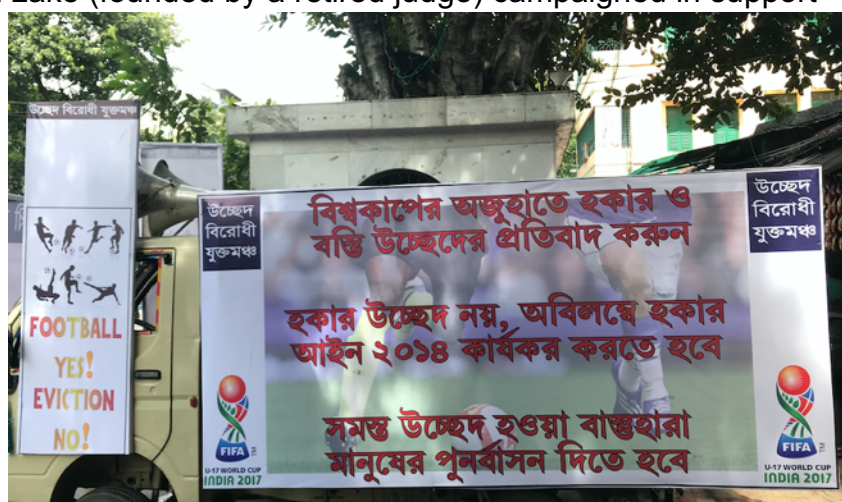


Figure 15 Anti Eviction Campaign

in squatters, and some of the squatters (about five) were able to establish a solidarity network through these committees. Further deputation to the Mayor and also negotiation meeting with the local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and councillors happened.

December 2017- Expansion of an anti-eviction solidarity network to other squatters. Further eviction of hawkers and two squatters were conducted by the municipal corporation. The anti-eviction solidarity network provided food and preliminary shelter to some of the evicted squatter dwellers. The network was also involved in protests against hawker evictions through sloganning and pamphletting.

One of the evicted squatters got 'rehabilitation' through adhoc arrangements with the help of a councillor. It was adhoc because during allotment the councillor gave a timeline of three years to the rehabilitated dwellers.

January 2018- The anti-eviction solidarity network attempted to expand the network in other squatters of Salt Lake area.

5.3.3 Displacement and Migration History of the Squatter Dwellers

Recent evictions in Salt Lake started in the name of conducting the FIFA U-17 World Cup of 2017 on May 20. For the beautification of the city for this 'mega-event' it is estimated that 22 low-income families (about 110 persons) from their homes in *Subhas Sarobar*, Kolkata, and 44 families along the canal in KB-KC block and 22 families in IC Block of Salt Lake City were evicted by the *Bidhannagar* Municipal Corporation (Habitat International Coalition, 2017). The ethnographic fieldwork includes interaction with some of the evicted families of KB-KC block and families who are on the verge of eviction near 12 number. tank area. Although this was the first eviction after T.M.C. came in power in 2011, the respondents suggest eviction was more frequent and violent during the CPIM's time. Every respondent has a history of displacement of at least 10-12 times since their migration to the city. This displacement history is essential to understand the practice of their occupancy and involvement in conflict politics, which is going to be elaborated later.

I attempt to map the migration history of five respondents. The following table highlights these five cases.

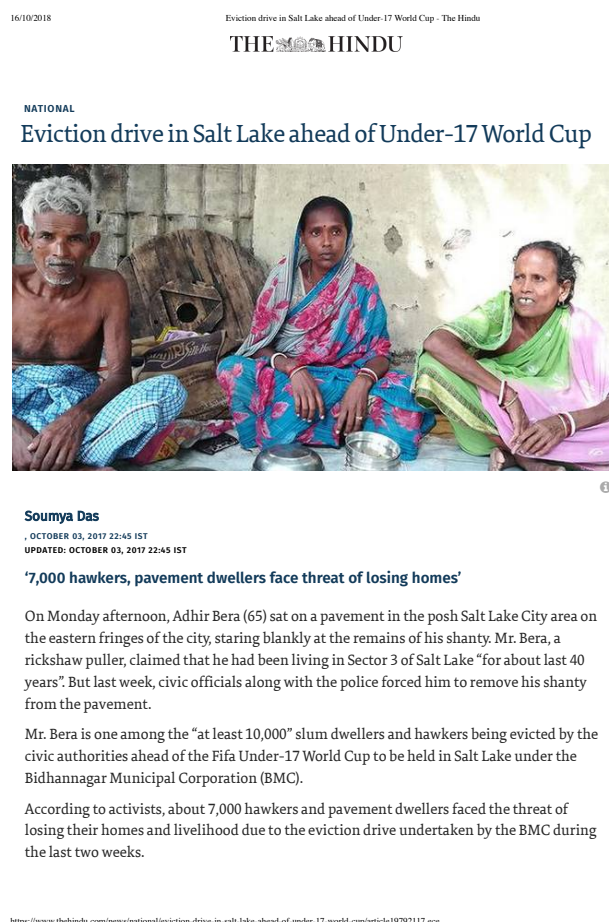


Figure 16 Newspaper Coverage about the Eviction

Source: *The Hindu* (3rd October 2017)

Table 8 Displacement History of the Respondents

Respondent	Place of Origin	Sites of Displacement	Duration of Stay	Reason for Migration
Respondent 1 Kamala	<i>Sundarban</i>	<i>Ultodanga</i> <i>Karunamoyee</i> in different sites, squatting to constructed apartments 12 number Tank Nonadanga	1970- 5-6 months 1970-1980 1980- current date 2009-current date	Migration of family in search of work
Respondent 2 Bimal	Bangladesh	<i>Duttapukur</i> (a suburb of Kolkata close to the India-Bangladesh border) <i>Kestopur</i> City Centre Opposite to Rabindra Ocacura Bhavan	1987- 1995 1995-1998 1998-2000 2000-current date	Post-partition religious violence in Bangladesh
Respondent 3 Rajesh	Bihar	<i>Beliaghata</i> 12 number Tank <i>Narkelbagan</i>	1992-1995 1995-1998 1998-2000	Employment Opportunity

		12 number Tank	2000- current date	
Respondent 4 Ram	<i>Sundarb an</i>	16 number Tank Nicco Park <i>Karunamoyee</i> Opposite to Rabindra Ocacura Bhavan	1993- 1995 1995 1995-2017 2017- current date	Migration of family in search of work
Respondent 5 Satish	<i>Machala ndapur</i>	<i>Karunamoyee</i> City Centre Opposite to Rabindra Ocacura Bhavan	1998-2000 2000 2000- current date	Migration of family in search of work

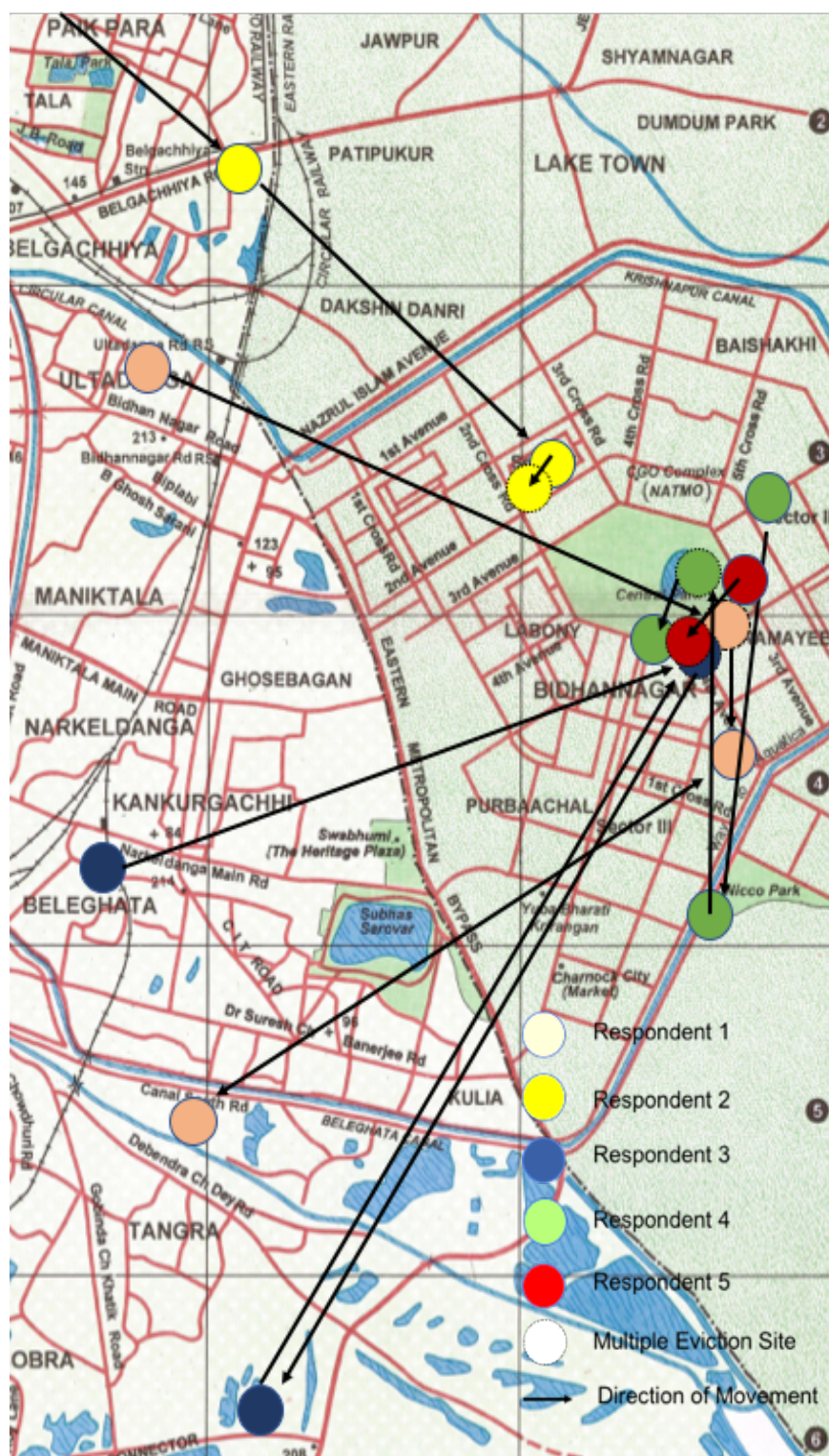


Figure 17 Displacement History of the Respondents

Source: NATMO modified by Author

The above figure maps the mobility and sites of evictions of the respondents within the city. The frequency of eviction for the respondents shapes their involvement in the shaping of conflict politics. This is discussed in the next section by unpacking the life histories of three respondents.

The personal history of mobility and eviction shapes capacity to perform conflict politics. Here, I portray three stories from my respondents and show their involvement in conflict politics.

Kamala's Story: Kamala came to the city in the 1970s along with her parents and brothers from *Sundarban*. She was engaged as a construction worker from the age of 14 and observed the changing political economy of the state. First, her family stayed in a squatter settlement in *Ultodanga* for 5-6 months. Then they were evicted from there, and political leaders affiliated to the then ruling party Communist Party of India Marxist (CPIM) asked them to squat in the *Karunamoyee* area of Salt Lake.



Figure 18 Kamala's Home

Initially, middle-class people from Kolkata were reluctant to shift to Salt Lake. The mythical story behind that reluctance is that as Salt Lake area is built by reclaiming lands from the lake so, construction would collapse anytime soon. As many of the constructed houses were empty, many people at the margins occupied those empty flats and started staying there. So, did Kamala and her family. This process of squatting was facilitated by the CPIM party through its informal networks as a part of their patronage politics. It was also part of the party's agenda for grassroots mobilisation to establish the image of the party as the poor's people's party. A popular slogan of CPIM that time was '*Goriber sathe CPM*' (translated: CPIM is always with

the poor). Going back to Kamala's story, Kamala and her family managed to occupy those empty flats till 1980. When asked about how Kamala received the information about empty flats, she replies,

"Nobody has given any information. We squatted by ourselves.....The houses were built for rich people and allocated through a lottery. But no one initially moved in here".

From the 1980s middle-class Bengalis started shifting to Salt Lake, and Kamala like many other families was evicted from those flats. After that, Kamala, along with her family, searched for an empty space in Salt Lake, and finally found a plot near 12 no tank and build their home by occupying public land. Eventually, Kamal got married in that shanty with a fellow shanty dweller and had kids. Her alcoholic husband died in 2000 and Kamala raised her kids as a single mother. Kamala also brought other distant relatives into that shanty. From the 1980s, there were a series of evictions in that plot. The shanty dwellers faced massive police violence during every eviction and each time the police used to confiscate their belongings. After every eviction, the shanty dwellers used to stay on the streets for some days. Then again, they would return to their sites and start rebuilding the shanty. While describing her eviction history Kamala states,

"Each time if they demolish, we need to pay Rs. 4,000-5,000 (approximately £44-55). We are poor people. How can we get this money every time? We earn 2,500-3,000 (approximately £28-33) every month. The police used to come at night. There was an incident 10-15 year back when at night while we were sleeping the police entered our room. He was drunk. We tied him with the rope. Then we took him to the police station and complained against him. After that what happened we didn't know. But we are staying here".

Kamala stated that she faced evictions at least 10-12 times. She was also arrested and threatened by the police during evictions. Kamala became a prominent face among shanty dwellers for their resistance. Now Kamala works as a municipal sweeper on contract after having worked as a construction labourer and household help. Because of her employment in the municipal corporation, she is also connected to various municipal contractors. In 2009, Kamala came to know about the rehabilitation colony build in *Nonadanga* and there also she occupied one of the unallotted flats and started staying there. Now Kamala splits her time between 12 number tank and *Nonadanga*. Kamala acknowledges the precarity of her condition

and also expresses this forced her for further assets creation through occupancy. If one home is demolished, she would have another place for some time. My conversation with Kamala shows this:

Me: *Initially, the space was small. Now you have expanded. So, do you think your belongingness to space has also increased because of that?*

Kamala: *Yes, I think so. I don't have any hopes of returning to my village. I am a displaced person. I have an aspiration that this space would be mine. I want that.*

Me: *None of these places is permanent. You also know that. Any day someone can evict you, and the government has evicted you multiple times. You don't go to your village. You like to get attached to this place. Why so? Why do you think this space is important for you?*

Kamala: *What will I do if I go back to my village. I need to come to this place for my livelihood. I can't do anything there. I need to survive; I need my livelihood. Everything is here. So, for me, this place is important.*

Bimal's Story: Bimal migrated from Bangladesh in the late 1980s. The reason for his migration is manifold. It was because of disputes between family members and also because of religious tension between Hindu- Muslims of that time. He expressed his disappointment at losing a large chunk of land property because of migration. After entering India through the porous border, his father rented a house in *Duttapukur* near the border area. To describe his migration history, Bimal says,

"We had acquaintances in Duttapukur area. One of our neighbours in Bangladesh was settled there. My uncle's house is in Habra (a nearby location). But we didn't land up there. Settling in a relative's house is difficult. After coming to this country, my father started working. We were kids, so we couldn't work. We rented a place there".

In his teenage life, Bimal migrated to the city Kolkata in search of work and started working as an electrician. After working for four years, he opened an electrical shop with his friend. But unfortunately, his friend betrayed him and he lost all the money that was invested. After that, Bimal started pulling rickshaws. While doing that, he got married and rented a place in a slum near *Kestopur*. He stayed there from 1995-1998. In 1998, as he could not afford the rent there, he came to the shanty located at the current location of City Centre 1 (a high- end shopping mall) in Salt Lake.



Figure 20 City Centre Mall



Figure 19 Bimal's Current Home

(Source: Google Image)

When the construction work for the City Centre started in 2000, along with other shanty dwellers, Bimal was also evicted. After the eviction, he along with other shanty dwellers occupied the vacant space opposite to the city centre which is still his residence. However, he was evicted from this place multiple times, but every time he came back to the same place. The conversation below portrays his eviction history.

Me: *When was the last eviction you can remember?*

Bimal: *I can't remember that well. It was before 2011.*

Me: *Where did you use to go at that time?*

Bimal: *Meaning?*

Me: *After eviction?*

Bimal: *Where can we go? We didn't go anywhere. We used to make a temporary shelter here only.*

Me: *Then, after some days, you tried to build it again!*

Bimal: *Not after some days. It was continuing for three-four months consecutively. In the morning we used to pack all the things and make it a level ground. Then in the evening we put bamboos in the hole and make the shelter. It was a makeshift arrangement.*

Me: *You continued this for three-four months.*

Bimal: *Yes. It was before 2011.*

Currently, Bimal works as a rickshaw puller and a mechanic. He is also actively involved with the Rickshaw Puller's union of T.M.C.. On the verge of eviction threat for the world cup, Bimal started mobilising other shanty dwellers for resistance, and now he has also emerged as a community leader in his shanty because of his mobilisation ability.

Ram's Story: Ram came to the city along with his parents in 1993 as a teenager. He first stayed in a shanty near 16 no tank for two years. Then Ram shifted to another site called Nicco Park in the proximity and finally landed up in *Karunamoyee* in 1995. He was staying in *Karunamoyee* till recently before getting



Figure 21 Ram's 'New' Home

evicted. Now he works as a taxi driver. He also got a temporary rehabilitation for three years by a municipal contractor. When I asked him about his precariousness and plan for resistance, he replies that this is the fate of poor people. They always need to move. They can't do anything.

These three stories are essential for understanding the interrelation between the practice of conflict politics and individual life histories. The life history of multiple evictions in case of Kamala and Bimal helped them to emerge as community leaders and also enabled them to challenge their precarity. As Ram has not encountered multiple evictions, he normalises his precarity. Kamala's life history also teaches her how to navigate through different power networks and bargain her position, which is also evident in her creating another asset in *Nonadanga*.

5.3.4 Practices of Conflict Politics

Postcolonial cities exhibit a subversive politics that operates at the margins of the state. These practices are embedded in everyday repetitive and habitual practices. Counter politics of resistance by marginalised groups is a repetitive and habitual

practice. This conflict politics is counter-hegemonic and destabilises the neoliberal norms in the urban. In relation to radical politics, Miraftab states, “They are counter-hegemonic in that they destabilize the normalized order of things; they transgress time and place by locating historical memory and transnational consciousness at the heart of their practices” (Miraftab 2009:33). At this juncture, I construct the conflict politics by the squatter dwellers of Salt Lake as counter-hegemonic which challenges and modifies the state’s agenda for socio temporal appropriation through evictions. These practices also demonstrate their ability to exert rights in cities or at least make their rights more visible. Despite the efforts from *Bidhannagar* Municipal Corporation, the complete eviction was not possible. However, the state continued to intimidate the squatter dwellers with the threats of eviction. Finally, after the completion of U- 17 World Cup the municipal corporation finally dropped the plan of sudden eviction as they realised it could cost them in the upcoming election. However, they continued to weaken the solidarity of the squatter dwellers by instigating a feeling of outsidersness for the Bangladeshi immigrants. In a discussion, Rajesh states,

“We need to make these people straight. The municipality people said if we want to stay here, there should not be any dirt. Also, these people pile up all the scarps here. For them, we can’t make ourselves vulnerable to evictions”.

This shows how the state attempts to create a divide within the community. This logic of ‘otherness’ among slum dwellers helps the state to rationalise eviction. The same logic was used by the state to mobilise elite groups of Salt Lake in support of eviction (discussed 5.3.5).

Anti-eviction politics in the Indian context is often theorised as resistance against state oppression. However, my ethnographic fieldwork in Kolkata during the eviction drive in Salt Lake provides an alternative framework to analyse anti-eviction politics. Political society does not always violently resist eviction; rather, sometimes they co-opt with the state through clientelism, sometimes they encroach space gradually and sometimes navigate within the power networks to acquire space. As discussed in earlier section (2.5) the thesis identifies these discursive political practices as conflict politics. In Salt Lake squatter settlements, the conflict politics that are identifiable are the following.

a) 'Ordinary Spaces of negotiations': Negotiation strategies between squatters and the state often blurs the distinction between legality and illegality. The state legitimises certain practices and simultaneously illegitimises other practices. The evicted dwellers from one squatter settlement negotiated with the municipality contractor for a temporary rehabilitation as Ram's story says. This forms a transactional relation by the people at the margins with the state. The contractor for the left one gave three-years permission of residence to the already evicted dwellers, and the allocation followed a formal procedure of identity verification. Whereas the same municipal corporation planned to evict other squatters. This selective allowance of the reappropriation of space happens for two reasons. Firstly, as the municipality contractor is part of the power network of the municipal corporation, the legitimacy is allowed. Secondly, the rehabilitated dwellers act as a pool of casual labour force for the construction work owned by the municipality contractor. This shows an example of patronage but not for the exchange of votes (as most of their voting rights are not within this electoral constituency). For the dwellers of the other squatter neither are they part of any political networks nor do they serve the purpose of the casual labour force. Hence the selective legitimacy of the squatters.

b) Occupancy and Strange Case of Clientelism: Patronage can be explained as an exchange between patrons and his/her supporters when supporters receive some favour from the patrons for their contingent support (Berenschot, 2018). Patronage happens through unequal power relations, but the imbalance is not completely in favour of the patrons as he/ she has some dependence for the sanctions from the community (Scott, 1972). Berenschot (2018) proposes to analyse patronage, not on the basis of benefits received rather in which terms the benefits are received. In his analysis, Scott (1972) differentiated patronage from power brokers and identifies three kinds of relationships for patron-client relations. The characteristics are a) existing power imbalance where clients may force the patron to provide certain services b) personal quality of relationship where mutual expectations are backed by community values and c) affection (Scott, 1972). For Scott (1972), patron-client relations are dyadic relationships. However, in postcolonial cities, patron-client relations are not necessarily dyad relations; rather, they are developed through a mesh of differential power relations. They operate through networked mobilisation of power (Allen, 2000).

It is also not possible to distinguish between a broker and a patron, as Scott (1972) explains.

In the context of Salt Lake squatter settlement, people at the margins simply occupied vacant spaces to exert their rights on the cities. Circulations of spatial knowledge hold importance in the process of occupancy. The interviews suggest two kinds of networks for circulation of spatial knowledge, namely: Social capital network and political capital network. The social capital network operates through self-exploration of spaces and family ties. In my case, there is a higher occurrence of occupancy through social capital networks as it pulls resources from internal networks through trust-building or practices of everyday life. The political capital operates through the politics of patronage. Here it pulls resources from external networks of authoritative power that lies with the local tyrants or the councillor or the municipality contractor. People at the margins of the state use both the networks strategically based on context and need. Kamala's story shows that Kamala uses both the networks strategically, which minimises her precarity. Whereas Ram only uses the political capital network and tries to normalise his precarity. To answer my question about his new allotment of houses Ram responds,

"Those of us who were staying in that ground, the contractor who is engaged in the construction was also staying there. We slum dwellers used to do his work. He is a contractor of the municipality. He has only assured us that we would get some space and some houses are getting constructed. Then we got the news that some houses are getting constructed here".

This shows why Ram got an allotment in the newly built houses after the eviction whereas many others didn't get that.

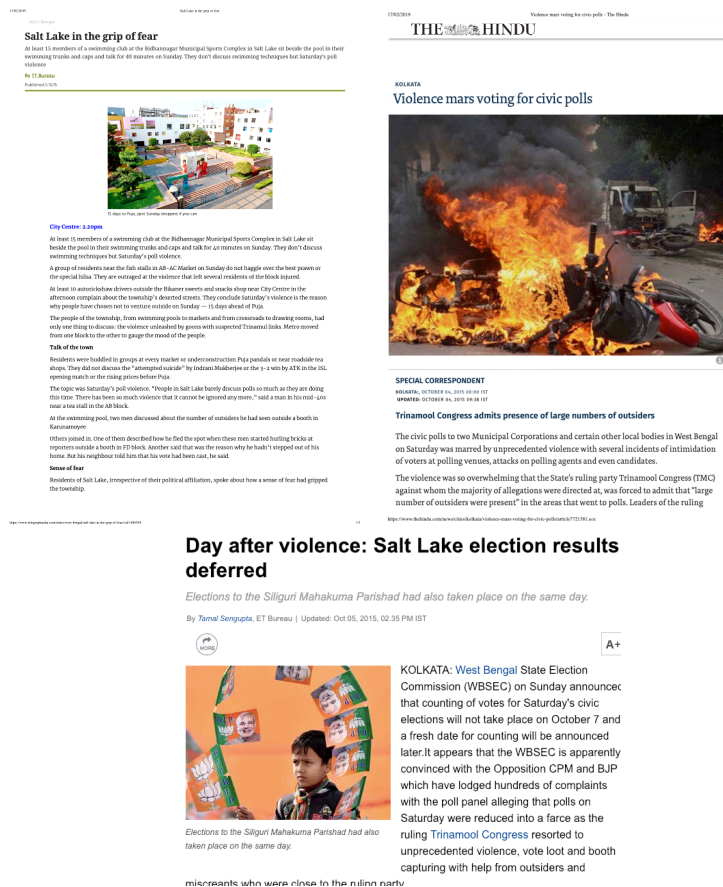


Figure 22 Salt Lake Election Poll Violence

Various Newspaper Reporting

Studies also show clientelism in south Asia works because of the malfunctioning of state institutions and because the control in the distribution of resources is prerequisite for political success (Berenschot, 2010, 2018). However, in the case of Kolkata, it operates in a slightly different manner. Firstly, the research argues, clientelism cannot be only hypothesised as the malfunctioning of state institutions. I would argue that in the postcolonial world, historically constructed multiple subjectivities of the state institutions cannot be seen as malfunctioning of it. Here, the postcolonial state consciously opts to maintain certain loopholes for political mobilisation. This political mobilisation is not only limited for electoral gains. Contrary to the existing belief about clientelism, in Kolkata, the state is always known for ‘unfair’ elections where violence, intimidation, false voting, polling booth capture are part of electoral politics (figure 22). Secondly, squatter settlers are not voters of the municipal elections as most of them are rural migrants and have voting rights only in their respective rural areas. However,

the state mobilises them for showcasing mass supports in rallies, to create local unions like rickshaw pullers union, hawker's union etc. When asked about her mobilisation strategy in shanties, the councillor replies,

"These shanty dwellers are not my voters. In Kolkata the slum dwellers are voters. In Salt Lake, the shanty dwellers are not my voters. I don't need to have any rapport with them. I think it important to have contact with educated people of Salt Lake, those who are my voters, who can understand me, I also need to understand them. It's more important to keep in touch with them. I do that only".

In my field interview only a limited number of respondents said their voting preferences go for the ruling T.M.C.. A majority of them still vote for the communist parties as they have a mythical image of the communist party as poor people's party. Others decide electoral preferences on the basis of the candidate irrespective their political affiliations. When asked about his preference for casting vote Ram says

"No. I don't cast my votes following any particular party. I don't listen to people and cast my vote to T.M.C. or Congress. I only cast votes to the candidates I like".

This actually shows a strange case of clientelism that operates in Kolkata and rejects the outcomes of a majority of the studies in postcolonial cities which show clientelism operating through the intersection of voting preferences and selective allowance of benefits. Here this relationship is more fluid and dependent on various factors.

c) 'Quiet Spaces of Encroachment': 'Quiet spaces of encroachment' is a process by which squatter dwellers expand their already occupied spaces (Alsayyad and Roy, 2004). This is an organic process and directly related to increasing family size. The respondents say this 'Quiet spaces of encroachment' enables them to exert their rights on cities more prominently by occupying more space. This is evident in my conversation with a resident- Suresh of the slum near Rabindra Okakura Bhavan.

Me: *How do you expand your space? When you feel there is no adequate space for your family, then you simply expand with plastics?*

Suresh: *No. See, we expand our houses based on the number of family members.*

Me: *Ok. The first one you have constructed, how many people used to live there?*

Suresh: *Three brothers, parents and my elder brother was married.*

Me: *So, you expanded it after your elder brother got married?*

Suresh: *No. We always had two houses. We three brothers in one house and parents in another. After everyone got married, we expanded each one.*

Suresh: *So, you just need to arrange the materials to expand. You don't have to tell anyone. Do you have to inform your neighbours?*

Suresh: *No.*

Me: *Nobody has ever opposed that too!*

Suresh: *No.*

This highlights the 'quiet spaces of encroachment' as an organic process. People quietly occupy spaces as per their need. This occupation also gives a sense of security in their precarious condition.

d) Mobilisation through Political Power: The squatter dwellers efficiently use different political networks and involve them in their conflict politics. The local MP and the mayor and councillor of the *Bidhannagar* Municipal corporation belong to the same political party T.M.C.. However, they belong to different lobbies within the party. When the mayor initiated the eviction, they went to the local MP for his support. When asked about his reactions about the local MP he states,

"We have a quite good relationship with him. He has not done any harm to us. He used to take us to the processions. When we drenched in the rain, he also drenched with us. He was like us. After this demolition, we went to meet him. He listened to us and also visited here. After he came, the evictions stopped".

In response to my comment about the different lobbies of T.M.C., he responds,

"The Mayor is responsible for everything. Our MP is a good person. Always helps poor people".

This clearly shows that they are aware of different factions within the party and capitalise that for mobilisation. Even the councillor also agrees with this. My conversation with her about the involvement of the local MP indicates this.

Councillor: *They went to Sujit Bose and thought they would be spared.*

Me: *I heard that.*

Councillor: *He doesn't have the IQ to understand it's not right to support them. Any person from Salt Lake can go to you. But its better you interfere after consulting with the grassroots political leaders.*

Me: *T.M.C. has immense reach at the grassroots level.*

Councillor: *Those of us who are working at the grassroots level, we tried to make him understand. He has understood his mistakes. But sometimes we have to pay the prices for other's mistakes. He is not paying the price, but people from this area have to pay the price. What else can I say?*

This shows her antagonism against the local MP. This also indicates she is against the interference of the MP in the matter of evictions. This also shows how squatter dwellers capitalise this difference to claim their rights and finally managed to halt the eviction process.

The next section maps how the state countered squatter dwellers movement through different means.

5.3.5 Elite Resistance

The poster (fig.23) was put up in Salt Lake by Citizen Forum in support of the eviction for the beautification of Salt Lake. The poster says “We as taxpayers have a right to live in a clean & pollution free surrounding.....*Bidhannagar* is ours and we not only have a duty but also a right to protect it from becoming an unplanned, dirty and chaotic township”. (sic.)

This shows a particular discourse of rights by the elites where dirt and planning are used as tools for exclusion and promotes neoliberal logics of what Baviskar (2006) says as bourgeois environmentalism.



Figure 23 Poster by Citizen's Forum Salt Lake

Citing Mary Douglas (1966), Ruth Barcan argues that the metaphor 'dirt symbolically signifies 'polluting agent' which destabilises various socio-cultural categories (Barcan, 2010). She also states the idea of sanctity as a metaphor used to "eliminate, conceal and purify" to preserve the order. The interview transcript from the civil society activist from Citizen Forum identifies this.

Me: *I think people in shanties claim they work here in Salt Lake resident's house as domestic help. So, the elites of Salt Lake want their services but don't allow them to stay here.*

Justice: *They can work as domestic help. I also have domestic help. But that necessarily does not mean they can stay. They can stay in some cheap places like Mukundapur and other areas. My help comes from Mukundapur. They work in our houses do not mean they can occupy any space they want. The government should make a rehabilitation plan for these people. But the problem is that who would get rehabilitation. I think no illegal occupants should get any rehabilitation. If that is the case, people would come here, occupy any space for two-three years and then ask for rehabilitation. That is not possible.*

The interview also shows how elites selectively deploy the logic of environment for exclusion. The civil society activist also expresses his aspirations for clean and green European cities. Justice states,

"I am not saying that hawkers should not be allowed. They can be allowed but in a designated space for hawking. The way some cities abroad and Singapore have managed to do. Now, look at it here. The metro station is coming up here. There will be very high traffic in this area. With all the informality here, this will be more problematic for the residents here".

But when asked about the pedestrian and bike-friendly model of European cities contrary to the high car use of Salt Lake residents, he replies,

"See; this is the problem. When we discuss pollution, always air pollution comes in the discussion. Why so? There are other kinds of pollution too. The canal water is very polluted. Why don't we discuss that? And air pollution happens from old taxis, not from our cars".

The aspirations for the world-class city is also very much echoed in my conversation with the councillor. She states,

“So, after getting evicted from different places, finally when they settled in the City Centre area, their businesses also flourished. They get a lot of office goers, college students who can’t afford to go to other places. They get dependent on these hawkers. Now, in the Karunamoyee area, people also have a dependence on hawkers. This much of hawkers were not there before. There are some councillors and political leaders who have promoted this for their personal gains and also for the gain of the people. Now when there is this world cup and book fair, a lot of people are coming from outside; they don’t want to see those hawkers. They don’t want to see the ugliness. We need to groom the bride. For that, previous scars need to be removed. The government is now busy with that beautification”.

The Citizen’s forum filed a case in the National Green Tribunal to clean the canal with the logic of sustainability. They also (founded by a retired judge) campaigned in support of eviction for ‘Clean and Green Salt Lake’ and conducted a series of meetings with the Mayor and also submitted a Detailed Project Report to make Salt Lake ‘liveable’. The mayor of *Bidhannagar* Municipal corporation expressed his support in favour of this campaign and also stated: “black plastics should be removed from Salt Lake”. Here black plastic is a metaphor used to indicate the shanty dwellers (shanty dwellers use plastics as a roofing material for their homes). This metaphor also signifies how the state creates vocabularies of exclusion at the cost of ‘dehumanising’ the shanty dwellers. Here, people are only represented as an unholy (black as a colour) object and the state justifies evictions. The mayor’s support to the civil society activism also indicates how the state in an illegible form operationalises metaphors of exclusion and subsequently, state and civil society get intermingled in such a form where it is difficult to identify them separately.

Unlike case 1, the Salt Lake eviction case demonstrates the postcolonial state’s direct involvement in the process of eviction and violence. Here the state represents both the local authority (Municipal Corporation) and the regional state (West Bengal). At both levels, the state is represented by the same political party T.M.C.. Here, civil society (represented by elite resistance) co-opt with the state and argues in favour of civility (ibid 2.3). Here the political society (squatter dwellers) faces the double articulation of hegemony; once through state and again through civil society. Though they counter the state through various ways of conflict politics, their counter-resistance to civil society activism is minimal. This has two reasons. Firstly, the political society’s direct dependence on civil society for everyday economic purposes (house help, driver

etc). Secondly, hegemonic appropriation by civil society is often overlooked because of its contingent nature. The above discussion about conflict politics in Salt Lake also highlights the multiplicity of the relationship between the state and political society. The subaltern groups (political society) are not only subject to state domination nor are they able to change their precariousness radically. Their practice of conflict politics is dependent on available resources (political or social capital), the nature of state oppression and the involvement of civil society.

In the next section, the discussion on conflict politics for Bhangar movement shows another dimension of this relationship.

5.4 Analysis of Conflict Politics- Urban Margin 3- *Bhangar* Anti Power Grid Movement

5.4.1 New Zones of Capital Circulation

It is already discussed in section 4.5.3 that postcolonial capitalism creates new zones for higher circulation.

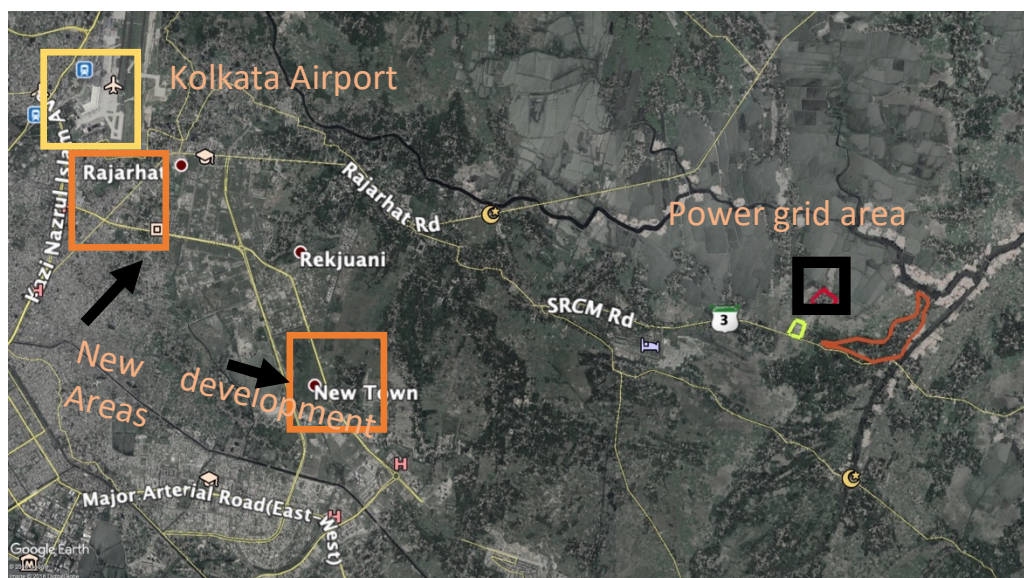


Figure 24 Changing Landscape

The

interviews

with the respondents suggest that the change in land-use in this area started in early 2000. Investments in the real estate project of Vedic Village opened the floodgate for rapid land conversion. Land price appreciation was up by almost three times after Vedic village. Before Vedic Village the land price was INR 25,000/Katha (approximately GBP 280/ 0.02 acre) which further appreciated to 60,000/ Katha (approximately GBP 670/ 0.02 acre) and finally the current rate is INR 2,00,000/ Katha (approximately GBP

2220/ 0.02 acre). Vedic Village was developed as a high-end commercial (resorts) and residential complex located next to the airport. This investment was followed by two more real estate projects *Tapovan* and *Shantivan*. This inflow of real estate finance and subsequent conversion of land created a distinct political economy of land in this area. Numerous agricultural plots were purchased for future investments in real estate and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). This represents capitalist accumulation by creating



Figure 25 Lands Waiting for Conversion

‘disposition of space in the form of zones’ (Samaddar, 2015). Here, disposition happens through contingent and gradual change of agricultural land to SEZs. This land conversion process has created a new political class in the area which Dirlik (1994) calls ‘hegemonic locals’. The hegemonic locals include land brokers and tyrant grassroots political actors. The tyrant grassroots political actors are usually affiliated with the ruling political parties and exercise coercive power to control the community through violence and domination. My conversation with Sheikh, who himself is a land broker, a previous associate of the Panchayat Samiti head Asif and currently a supporter of Jami Committee, supports this.

Me: *You were initially associated with T.M.C.. You have seen things from inside. How was Asif involved in this? Was he part of this type of land transactions?*

Sheikh: *Transactions couldn’t happen without his presence. Anyone willing to purchase land in this area would first go to the Panchayat head. He would go to the Panchayat head, and then he takes responsibility with the help of his people because he can get some money out of this. His people take care of fencing, landfilling everything. With his muscle power, he does everything. Everyone understands that this is happening with the support from the Panchayat head. Forcefully he occupies the land and put fences around this. What can the owner do? Can he demolish the fences? No. That would stay like that for some time. Then he only distributes it at a reduced price. The land is sub distributed in many holdings. But sub holdings were never registered. There is no proper demarcation.*

The postcolonial state also becomes a necessary stakeholder in this process by exercising its territorial control (Margulis, McKeon and Borrás, 2013). The state proposed the establishment of a power grid in this area for the purpose of 'power trading' which McDonald (2009) calls 'electric capitalism'. Electricity is an essential infrastructure for industry, agriculture or service sector and it automatically sugar-coats capital accumulation as a necessity for public goods. However, it also depicts an important linkage to the capital accumulation process with a massive investment opportunity and trading purposes (McDonald, 2009). The *Bhangar* case resembles this unique feature of postcolonial capitalism with the government's proposal to build a power grid in this area with the assumption of easy land acquisition process by the mobilisation of 'hegemonic locals'. However, this didn't work out for the state and instigated the conflict. The reasons for the conflict are very similar to what Lombard (2016) mentions in the case of Mexico, where different actors and their claims, ambiguous administrative capacity and local power relations shaped the intensity of the conflict (Lombard, 2016). The next section discusses the chronology of the events, which gives an idea about the intensity of conflict politics.

5.4.2 Chronology of events at *Bhangar*

The chronology of the events in the anti-power grid movement of *Bhangar* helps us to identify the different stages and subsequent strategies that were adopted and also highlights the dynamism of conflict politics, particularly in the case of *Bhangar*.

2015- An initial deputation was sent to the local MP in protest of land acquisition

2016- The state forcefully attempted land acquisition with the help of the police force. Villagers started resisting without any support from any political parties. However, some of the villagers also received compensation money from the state. About three villagers were arrested. Power grid corporation stopped any construction activity on the site. Contacts were made with the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star at the end of the year. Deputations were submitted to the Block Development Officers.

Jan- February 2017- Resistance became violent with the death of two protesters. A massive attack was conducted by the state political party local tyrants on the villagers. As a counter mechanism resource mobilisation by the Communist Party of India

(Marxist Leninist) Red Star also happened. The state conducted multiple arrests of villagers as well as political workers and leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star.

March-September 2017- Formation of *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* (Land, Job, Ecosystem and Environment Protection Committee). This committee became the grassroots organisation for mobilisation of resources for resistance. Formation of village committees through this organisation. Meetings with power grid corporation and state representatives were unsuccessful. Three-four villages were declared as state free zones. Opposition parties extended their support for the resistance movement.

September- December 2017- The local tyrants orchestrated further attacks on villagers and committee members. The ruling party declared it would continue with the power corporation. Villagers with various protest mechanisms declared non-negotiable position to resist the power grid. A further arrest of political workers of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star happened.

Mid May 2018- *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* filed nine independent candidates for the Panchayat election, and finally, five of them won the elections at the lower tier seats of the elections.

June 2018- The movement of the leadership got arrested in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

July 2018- The leadership received bail and were released from prison

August 2018- The state administration arranged a meeting with the protesters for negotiations. Finally, the government agreed to increase the compensation amount and the representatives of the protesters agreed on the construction of a power substation instead of a power grid. Some of the protesters and organisations associated with the movement interpreted this as a betrayal. However, the *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* considers this a success for their movement.

September- November 2018- Developmental activities like road construction, identification of beneficiaries for government programs etc. started from the supervision of *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee*.

December 2018- January 2019- Further conflict and minor violence erupted. The construction works in the power grid was stopped because of the resistance from the committee. Further negotiations with the state government officials and situation became normal.

March 2019- For the upcoming parliamentary election, *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* filed nominations for three candidates in different constituencies and also extends their support for the CPIM candidate for their constituency (*Jadavpur*).

5.4.3 Conflict Politics at the Margins

The movement of *Bhangar* represents a unique political field formed through conflict politics, which was initiated with the forceful acquisition of land but finally able to reach a broader political imagination of participatory democracy. In response to questions about the objective of the movement, CPIML Red Star leader and a key person for the Bhangar movement Alok responds,

“We need to develop a collectiveness. The more people would try to control; there will be more conflicts with the state. That would gradually lead to more class struggles and mass movements which would gradually increase people’s aspirations to participate in the state making process”.

This certainly highlights a broader perspective of the movement towards participatory democracy. This broader political imagination also shapes the strategies for practising conflict politics which encompass politics of autonomy, negotiations, participation in electoral democracy and mobilisation. Each of these strategies has a specific objective and creates specific artefacts and infrastructure for the movements.



Figure 26 Villages involved in the Movement

A) Politics of autonomy: Politics of autonomy can be defined as a process to occupy, reclaim and reappropriation of space as a means to social transformation (Vasudevan, 2015). As Vasudevan (2015) notes, the act of occupation creates an alternative habitus of common spatial fields to participate produce, operationalise sentiments, ideas, values to achieve rights. The acts of occupation reconfigure space as an ‘oeuvre’ to maximise user value over exchange value (Vasudevan, 2015). In the Bhangar case, the politics of autonomy operates through the creation of a liberated zone. From 2017 March, six villages created a liberated zone free of state presence. After the massive police violence in February 2017 with the death of two protesters, the villagers resisted the local tyrant groups with brickbats, catapult, wooden rods etc. and finally declared six villages free of any state presence. The local Panchayat leader states,

“Police cannot enter inside those villages. As the police are not there, there is complete lawlessness”.



Figure 27 Creation of State free areas

*Source: Jami, Jibika, Basthutantra and
Poribesh Raksha Committee*

The interview with the protesters reveals the creation of an enclosure as a political strategy was taken consciously to avoid further violence and provocation from the state. *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* leader Mohammad says,

“We fought against them with whatever we had. We did not allow those goons to enter in our area. We were scared. If we allow them to enter, they could kill us”.

This shows that the committee created a state free zone as a defence mechanism to avoid further violence.

B) Formal Transactional: The formal transactional methods are those engagements which are legal in nature from the position of interpretation by the state (Mahadevan and Ijlal, 2017). This includes creating a pressure group through formal opposition political parties and subsequently pushing the issue for discussion in the state legislative assembly. The protesters also submitted a formal deputation letter to the District Magistrate, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) and other administrative bodies of the state to voice their resistance against the proposed power grid.

The formal transactional strategies also include negotiations with state officials. The negotiation process started after Alok, the leader got arrested in June 2018 by the police. Almost a thousand people came on the street to protest and simultaneously

there were discussions on negotiations to start the project. Finally, *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee* agreed to sit in a meeting with the state government officials. The state government agreed to give due compensation to the farmers and the committee also agreed not to create any more ‘troubles’. Each side considers this as their victory, which was also reported in the newspaper (fig. 28).

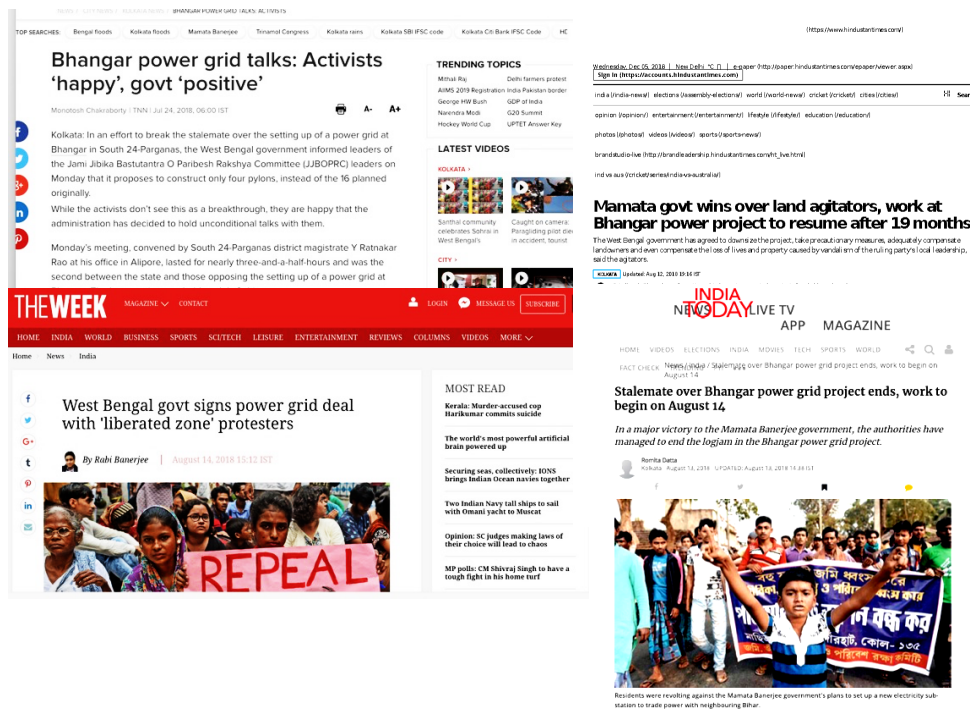


Figure 28 Newspaper Coverage of Negotiations

Source: Various Newspapers

C) Participation in Electoral Politics: The committee also participated in the recently held Panchayat election of West Bengal in 2018. 19 candidates filed nominations at various levels of the Panchayat, and finally, five candidates won at the Gram Panchayat level (the lowest tier of the three-tier Panchayati Raj System). As a reason for participating in the election the CPIML Red Star leader Alok mentions:

“Participation in the election is not a choice here, but it is a necessity which comes with the movement. People’s movement has its own limitations. Maybe their vision is not very far. Whatever I just said, the committee is taking decisions on the basis of that. But there was a similar thinking process which was operational among the conscious section. That’s why it became easier. Otherwise, some ruling class party would have captured this. But this would help this movement. If people who are against this movement, and if they have people’s

mandate, then they can curb people's movement. If the panchayats stay with them, they won't bother for anything. For them, power is a significant matter. The idea that he can be thrown out of that can very painful to him. This would make him more insecure and apathetic. The more their footings among people will reduce, the more they would be interested in compromising. Otherwise, they would be ferocious and would try to attack. They will face problems for both cases. We would benefit from them".

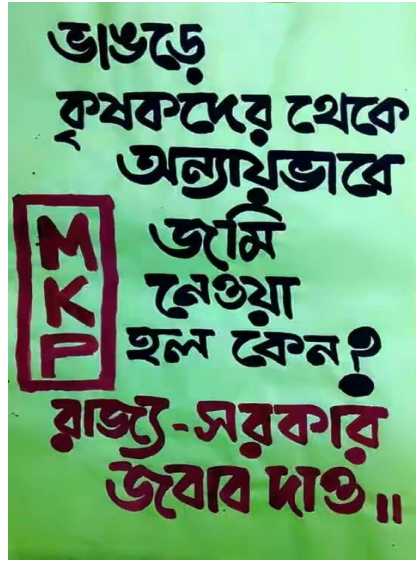
These evidences that participation in electoral politics was a strategic choice to practice conflict politics and enable better negotiation strategies.

Table 9 Stages of Conflict Politics and Associated Manifestations

Stage	Vocabularies	Reasons	Manifestations
Initial stage: Late 2016 Fig 29	Anti-power grid, Anti land grabbing	Forceful land acquisition, Dominance of the local tyrants and lack of public consultation for the land acquisition process	Mobilisation, creation of <i>Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee</i> Initiation of protest
Early 2017 Fig 30	Anti- Karimul (local tyrant)	Violence and domination	Organised resistance, shifting camps from Trinamool Congress (T.M.C.) to Jomi Committee
Mid 2017	Discourse of development	Unleashing democratic aspirations among people through movement	Increased intensity of the contestation, Alliance with opposition parties

Before the Panchayat election Mid 2018 (Fig. 31)	Anti T.M.C., Anti Mamata (current CM)	Otherness from the state, intensified violence, arrest of the protesters	Contesting election
After the Panchayat election Mid 2018- till now	Discourse of development	Part of the Panchayat, the release of arrested protesters	Reduced intensity of the movement

D) Creation of Vocabularies as artefacts of the movement: The vocabularies which are used in the movement, were selected strategically for mobilisation and outreach; for the creation of a broader political imagination; and finally to alter the hegemonic appropriation of power. The vocabularies have also changed based on the stage of the movement, objectives and for the sustenance of the movement. This change of vocabularies is also reflected in the posters, leaflets and content of public speech.



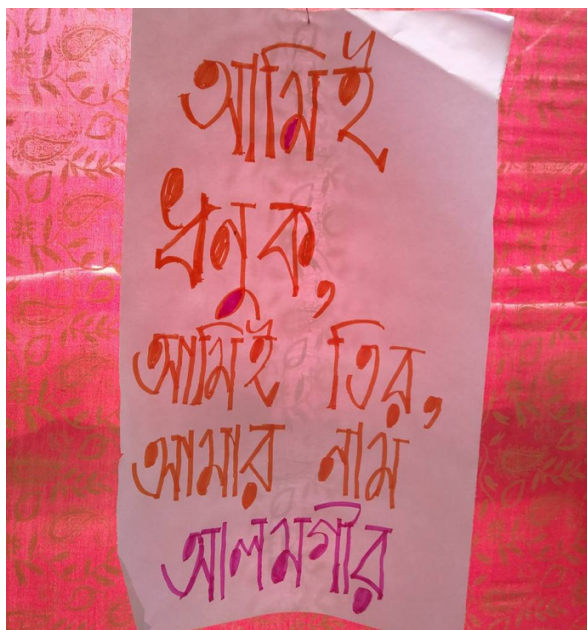
Translation: State Government answer why the land was taken from the framers wrongfully.



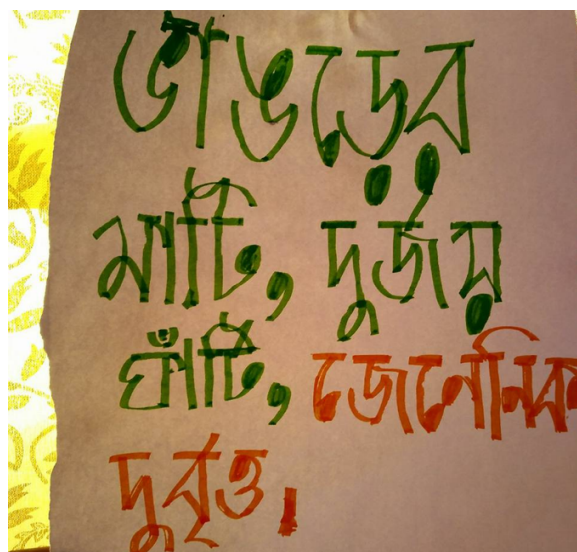
Translation: Go away Power-grid

Figure 29 Posters at the Initial Phase

Source: Photography by Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee



Post-death of protester after state violence-Translation: I am the bow; I am the arrow; my name is Alamgir (name of the person/martyr)

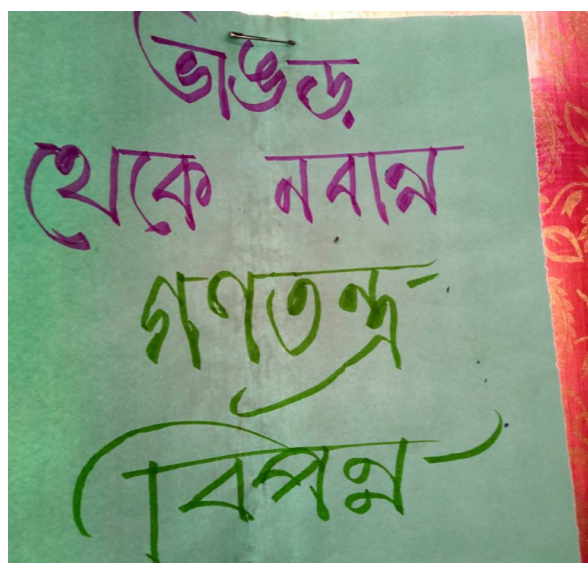


Mid 2017- Translation: The soil of Bhangar is an indomitable bastion, Let the tyrant know that.



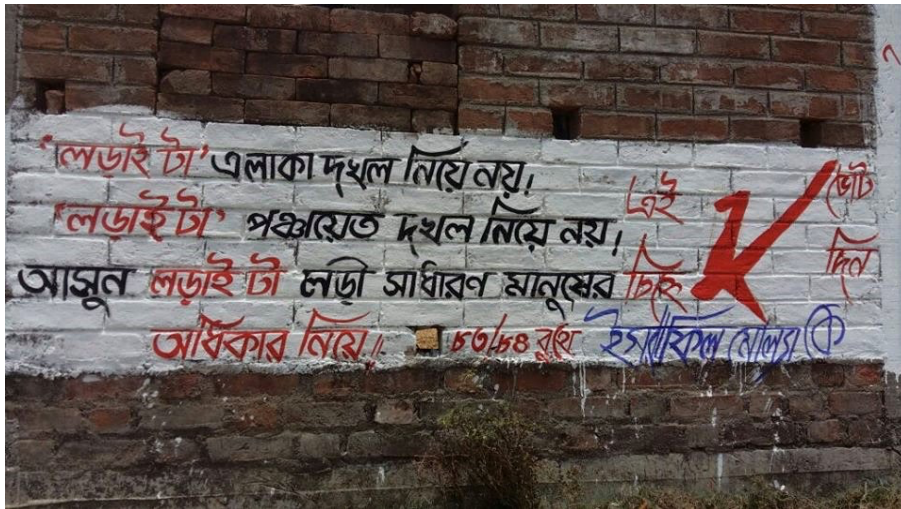
During the Peak of the Movement-Translation: Jomi Committee is giving the call to down with the attackers

Source: Jomi, Jibika, Bastutantra and Poribesh Raksha Committee



Before taking the decision of participation in Election-Translation: From Bhangar to Nabanno (the administrative building of the current ruling party) the democracy is in danger

Figure 30 Posters at the Pick of the Movement



Translation: The fight is not to control the area. The fight is not to get control of the Panchayat. Let us fight this battle for the rights of common people. Cast your vote for this symbol.

Source: Photography by Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh

Figure 31 Poster before Election

E) Support from Civil Society: The Bhangar movement has also mobilised part of civil society for their support. Civil society was actively involved in all phases of the movement in various activities. One of the prominent roles civil society played was to organise demonstrations in various parts of Kolkata and hence brought the Bhangar movement to broader political imagination (fig. 33). Some of the university professors were also involved in a separate environmental assessment of the project. They provided scientific information from academic work across the world regarding the emission of poisonous gas from the power grid. This played an important role in the movement as the state was unable to nullify the claims of the protesters as 'non-scientific'. Involvement and subsequent imprisonment (fig. 32) of civil society members gave heightened prominence of the movement. Simultaneously, this involvement of civil society also demonstrates the circulation of resistance infrastructure from the peri-urban area of Bhangar to the heart of Kolkata (Fig 32 L demonstration at central Kolkata).

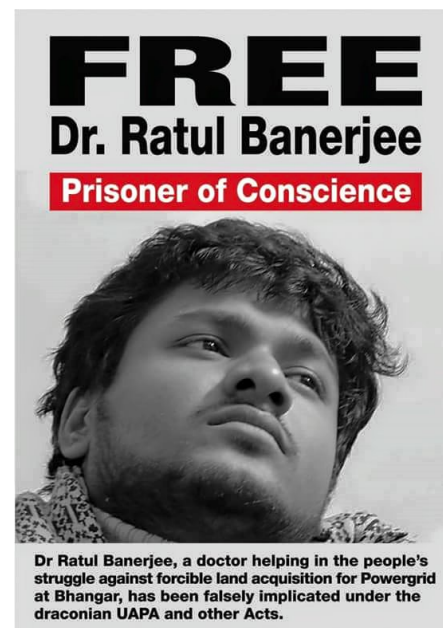


Figure 32 Civil Society Support for Bhangar Movement



Figure 33 Demonstration Locations in Kolkata

5.4.4 Response from the State

The state operationalised counter strategies through various networks of power which includes administrative bodies, Panchayat, local tyrants and the police force. Initially, the project was proposed in the Rajarhat area. Power grid projects are usually controversial because of their probable human and ecological impact. Because of that land price depreciation usually happens in the nearby areas of the power grid. Rajarhat land prices are comparatively higher and a strong push from the real estate lobby, the state relocated the project site from Rajarhat to Bhangar. Selection of Bhangar as a site was predominantly dictated with the logic of party's (T.M.C.) strong grassroots mobilisation capacity in that area. Simultaneously, the ruling party also underestimated the conflicts among various factions of the party and people's growing dissatisfaction with the local tyrant. The state's response to the conflict politics can be categorised in three forms.

A) Discipline and Domination: At the initial phase, the movement was strengthened because of the sabotage effort within the party against the local tyrant. Instead of a successful mobilisation, there was counter mobilisation which was prominent when grassroots political workers of T.M.C. joined the protester's group. However, it was never a rebellious act by the grassroots workers as it happened with the backing of a group of T.M.C. leaders to control the local tyrants. This also came repeatedly in the interview with the local tyrant.

Asif: "At this moment the government has no say. And I am a person who is part of the government, so I couldn't say a single word against the government. Why government is not proactive to curtail this don't ask me that. I will not tell you anything about that..... No, actually we have different lobbies. So, don't know who is asking for what purpose. Then it will be used against us".

B) Utilising Administrative Institutions: The state also exercised its administrative power through coercive forces by utilising the police, rural local body institutions and paramilitary forces. Initially, the local police station was used for filing cases against the protesters for damaging public properties, obstruction in public works etc. They have also utilised the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 for the arrest of the protest leaders for a period of days to a couple of months. At least 20 people were arrested

and jailed including the leadership. There was also constant surveillance of the leadership through tracking of mobile towers.

Secondly, Panchayati institutions stopped any land registration or mutation process in the area. Any service from the Panchayat, such as issuing income/ caste certificates was made inaccessible to the villagers from the involved villages. Major developmental works like construction of roads and distribution of program benefits were curtailed in the involved villages.



Figure 34 Paramilitary Forces Guarding the Perimeter

Thirdly, paramilitary forces were installed to protect the power grid perimeter, and for intimidation, they used to march into the villages every morning and evening.

C) Negotiations: Finally, after the Panchayat election, they started negotiations with the protesters. Both parties signed an agreement paper where the following things were listed (CPIML Red Start, 2018):

- a) Revision of the scheme and proposals of two 400 kv power transmission line has been accepted. One line will be underground. Revised scheme is no longer a power grid and it will be a regional substation.
- b) Distance between two lines, distance from the ground and any permanent structure will follow the Indian Electricity Act.
- c) The machinery and the previous line will be intact before the end of completion.
- d) The substation will be a gas insulated substation however a final decision will be taken after resolving of the pending case in National Green Tribunal (NGT).
- e) Inspection of Electromotive force will be done by technical experts with proper technical kits.

- f) The matter of legal cases against the agitators will be withdrawn subject to the court's approval. However, the police can identify and prosecute the agitators and their sympathisers according to the law.
- g) A sub-committee chaired by the District Magistrate will be formed for successful implementation of the project. Members of the subcommittee will include: Statutory District Level Power Coordination Committee, the general and police administration, the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company, West Bengal State Electricity Transmission Company and the representatives of the *Jomi Jibika, Bastutantra and Poribesh Raksha* Committee.
- h) Welfare and Development schemes will be taken up in consideration the affected people who lost their lands and others who are connected to the land. This will include skill development training, training for small assistance, supplying useful kits for solid waste management, development of women led SHGs, grants for education, health, business, agriculture, livestock, fisheries etc., construction of local roads, restoration of the river, road electrification, etc,
- i) Compensation for affected people including the deceased and injured people
- j) Construction of the substation will start from 14/08/2018.

The following table summarises how the state attempted to counter the resistance at different phases.

Table 10 State's Response

Phase	Reasons	Mechanisms	Response by Villagers
Phase 1: end of 2015- Early 2016	Intimidation, forceful acquisition, political domination	Operationalised through local tyrant, sporadic violence	Initiation of the movement
Phase 2: Early 2016- mid-2017	Loosing partial political control	Intensified violence, police firing, massive arrest, administratively stopping land mutation process	Intensified movement, Alliance with opposition parties

Phase 3: Mid-2017- Mid-2018	Complete loss of political control within the liberated zone	Spreading rumour of outsidersness and Naxal link, Verbal threats, sporadic violence, sporadic arrests	Contestation in election
Phase 4: Mid 2018 to current	Partial loss in election	Negotiation with <i>Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee</i> , the arrest of the local tyrant	Partial win in election, acceptance of government's compensation 'package'

The practices of conflict politics in the case of Bhangar demonstrate two things. Firstly, it shows the complex relationships between the state, civil and political society represented by various forms of relationship (antagonism, negotiations, dominance and counter-hegemonic). Secondly, it shows the dynamic nature of the movement, where the subversion of political power happens continuously. A stronger counter-hegemonic force often counters the state domination and violence by the subaltern subjects. Simultaneously, the subaltern subjects also negotiate with the state at a certain point. Hence, Bhangar case represents a seesaw situation of power struggle.

This section has discussed various forms of conflict politics that took place in three case studies. It also constructs typologies of conflict politics both from the state and from political society's perspective. The typologies indicate heterogeneity in terms of the relationship between the state, civil society and political society. Doing so, it challenges the binary construction of dominance and subordination between state and political society. It also highlights the dynamic nature of civil society, which is sometimes hegemonic and co-opts with the state and sometimes work against the state. To understand how these relationships are operationalised through networks of power, the next section maps power networks and actors for each case study.

5.5 Power, Networks and Actors

5.5.1 Power Networks in Loomtex Mill

From the above discussion of conflict politics, it is evident that a variety of actors are associated with conflict politics. It is also sometimes a fuzzy terrain where the everyday state is almost indistinguishable from society (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). The boundary between state and non-state actors becomes “illusive, porous and mobile” (Mitchell, 1991). In the case of Loomtex jute mill, the association of the ruling party and the owners exhibit a complex nexus of power. Instead of political commitments, the owners always align themselves with the ruling party. The interview with the workers revealed that before the 2011 assembly election of West Bengal the flags for the CPIM party rally was printed inside the mill. As soon as the CPIM lost that election, the mill was used for printing leaflets for the victory rally for Trinamool Congress party (current ruling party). This shows how quickly the owners align themselves with the ruling power. This also shows how the everyday state uses mill owners for its political mobilisation and returns them favours for providing apparatus (e.g. police) to exploit and dominate the working class. This hegemonic identity of the state can be well explained through the following diagram.

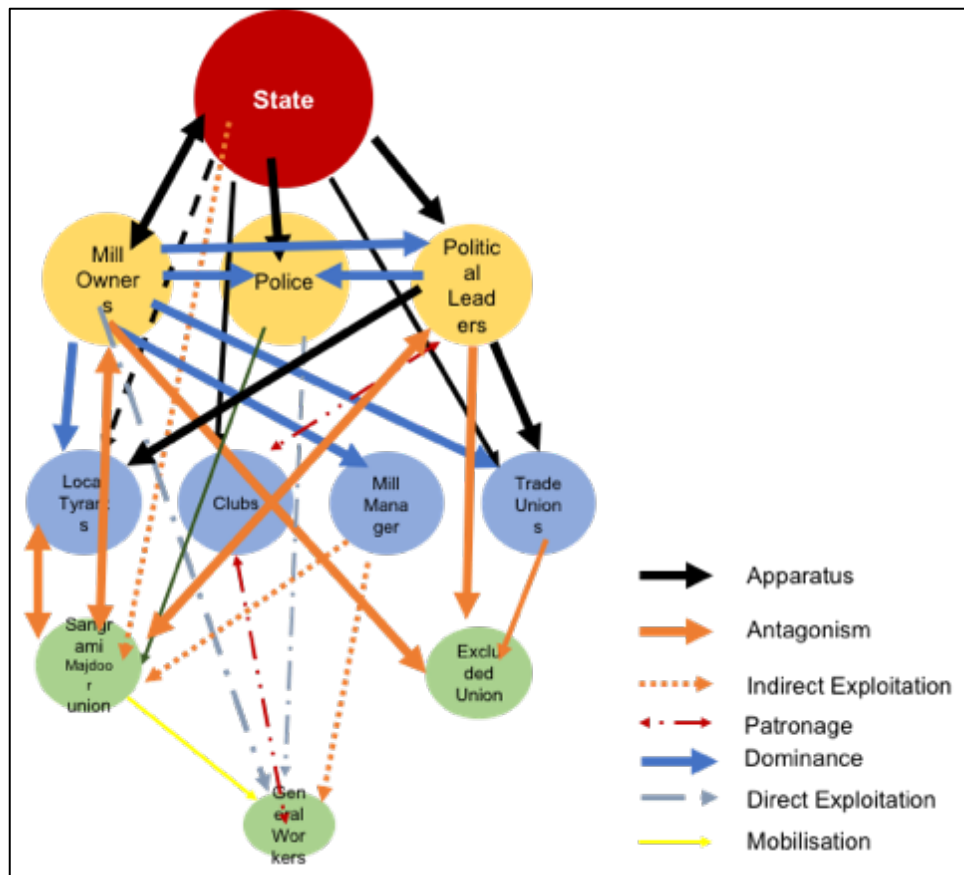


Figure 35 Power, Network and Actors, Loomtex

Here the state is situated at the top of the power network which uses political leaders, the police and mill owners as apparatus for exploitation of the people at the margins. Simultaneously it also uses local tyrants, trade unions and clubs for political mobilisation. Here, dispossession and rehabilitation happen simultaneously (Sanyal, 2014). Dispossession happens to safeguard capitalist interest by the state. This allows the mill owners to ‘quietly’ change land use for profit maximisation and deliberately utilise the administrative apparatus of the police force for domination and violence. In return, the mill owners pay ‘hush money’ to the police and local leaders. They also support the state for political mobilisation. For rehabilitation, the state also regulates the local tyrants and clubs for selective deployment of rights for the people at the margins through ‘Quiet encroachment’ or occupancy. The name of Manoj as a local tyrant came up multiple times in the interview with the workers. When asked about Manoj’s background Laksman, the Sangrami Majdoor Union leader says,

“Manoj is a local goon¹⁵ under T.M.C.. He is also part of the student union in Barrackpur college. Initially, he was with CPM. Then after the change of power, he stood for the municipal election as an independent. He won two wards with his muscle power. He is a councillor of Seven number ward. He extorts money from the hotels in Barrackpur. He extorts money from the paper mill. After the change of ownership, Manoj took control over the mill. He extorts money from this mill as well. He is also an advocate of Barrackpur court. He has also beaten up a police officer and was imprisoned in jail for a few days. Now he has joined T.M.C.. With this mill problem, he is not coming at the forefront. There are two fractions between T.M.C.. In one lobby it is the local MLA and MP and him. In another lobby there is Ghosh, the MLA from the nearby area. The groups are different. All the problems in the mill started after DIDICO took over. Manoj is involved in all”.

This clearly shows the nexus between the ruling party of the state, local tyrant and mill management. Sangrami Majdoor Union engages in conflict politics through an antagonistic relationship with the state as well as the political leaders. However, they maintain a complicated relationship with the police and the mill owners. This relationship is sometimes antagonistic, sometimes negotiations, sometimes violent sometimes contingent. It is discussed earlier (ibid 5.2.7) how they maintain a fuzzy relationship with the police. Sometimes they pressurise the police to fulfil their demands. Sometimes they also aim to fight legally against the management by involving the police in their conflict politics. Their strategic navigation within the power networks exhibits an innovative form of non-party trade union politics. The innovation lies in collective bargaining ability without acting as a power broker. They have always avoided a provocative politics of violence. Simultaneously they also utilise other non-violent forms of direct antagonisms (ibid 5.2.7). Although CPIML Red Star played an important role to form those autonomous non-party alliances, the operationalisation of politics happened through grassroots leaders who emerged during the process. The solidarity networks among different political groups pave the way for an alternative issue-based politics.

¹⁵ The thesis uses tyrant and goons to represent two different actors. By tyrant, the thesis means the neighbourhood oppressor who is well connected with the local political networks. By goons the thesis means those who usually work under the tyrant and the tyrant mobilises them for violence and other illegal activities.

As discussed earlier (ibid. 5.2.2) mill politics are not separate political actions; rather, they are shaped and influenced by neighbourhood politics. Simultaneously, mill politics also influence the politics of the neighbourhood. The Loomtex mill workers movement is also not an exception. The networks of domination, utilising local tyrants for controlling the labour force and clientelism influenced shop floor relations. Simultaneously, Sangrami Majdoor Union also uses its neighbourhood ties for mobilisation and solidarity. The leaders of Sangrami Majdoor Union are also influential in the mechanism of incremental occupancy. The details of this will be discussed in the next chapter, along with spatial adhocism.

5.5.2 Outcomes of Conflict Politics at Loomtex

Authors mention that the experience and meaning of work and subjectivities of labour politics have changed under global capitalism (Gooptu, 2007; Cumbers *et al.*, 2016). Gooptu (2007) argues that the decline of class-based actions, lack of state protection and fragmented working-class have affected the political subjectivity of the labour force. For Cumbers *et al.* (2016), as capital is more mobile than labour, it outmanoeuvred the labour force to new locations. However, both the arguments need to be relooked at in the context of Loomtex mill. Firstly, as Gooptu (2007) argues, global capitalism led to the decline in class-based actions and fragmented labour force, I differ in suggesting that historically working-class identity and politics were never class-based. As discussed earlier, Chadavarkar (1998) and Chakraborty (1981) highlights, the divisions historically exist within the labour force. The political outcomes of labour movements are dependent on various factors. By highlighting the outcomes of the Loomtex movement, this section would attempt to unpack this. Secondly, as Cumbers *et al.* (2016) argues about the geographical reconfiguration of the workforce, the Loomtex movement portrays that resistance is predominantly against casualisation of the labour force and for entitlements. Although the change of land-use within the mill area may eventually shift the labour force to another location, surprisingly, the mobilisation strategies and vocabularies of the movement do not reflect this. One possible reason for that could be as the state and mill management operationalised the land-use change in such a slow and contingent way that the labours do not feel an urgent threat about relocation. Simultaneously, several adhoc arrangements in disguised forms from the management as well as from the labours

also create a hindrance to shape the conflict politics with these narratives which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter related to adhocism.

If we look at the outcomes of Loomtex movement, it achieved three things. Firstly, the movement was able to pressurise the management for sanction of PF for 350 workers, foreclose the court cases against the labourers and unconditional acceptance of labourers after suspension. Secondly, it shows the importance of a non-trade union autonomous politics and is able to create a space for better bargaining and negotiations. Finally, through community awareness and consciousness building, it threatens the management and the state against dominance and hegemonic appropriation of power.

With their case studies of the Gate Gourmet Dispute at Heathrow 2005 and Lindsey Oil Refinery case of 2009, Cumbers et al. (2016) show the success of labour movement is dependent on the agency of labour, broader solidarity networks and collective interest. In the case of Loomtex, although the movement is based on collective interest and agency formation, it lacks the broader solidarity networks. Lack of a broader solidarity network also hinders the formation of broader political imagery. Simultaneously, the controlling mechanism of bribing and strategic deployment of violence through political channels and state institutions also distort the collective interest. As well, because of the formation of a labour agency, the management recognises Sangrami Majdoor union as a pressure group and feel the urge to reorients their strategies of domination.

5.5.3 Power Networks in Salt Lake

In the case of Salt Lake, the state directly involves in the eviction and maintains a hegemonic relation with political society (squatter dwellers). It operationalises its hegemonic power through apparatus like the police and urban local body (Figure 36). Whereas, the political society is antagonistic to the state. However, as the local MP (also part of the state and the same political party) is sympathetic to their demands they are supportive of him. Here, the political society navigates within the power networks of the state apparatus and capitalises on the conflict between different lobbies of the same political party. Civil society co-opts with the urban local body and supports the evictions. As, political society is economically dependent on civil society

for job opportunities (driver, house help) they are not apparently antagonistic to the civil society. The municipality contractor plays an important role in the clientelism, which is discussed further in the next chapter. He has no direct involvement in the eviction being a part of the urban local body. However, he provides partial rehabilitation for some of his workers by occupying land.

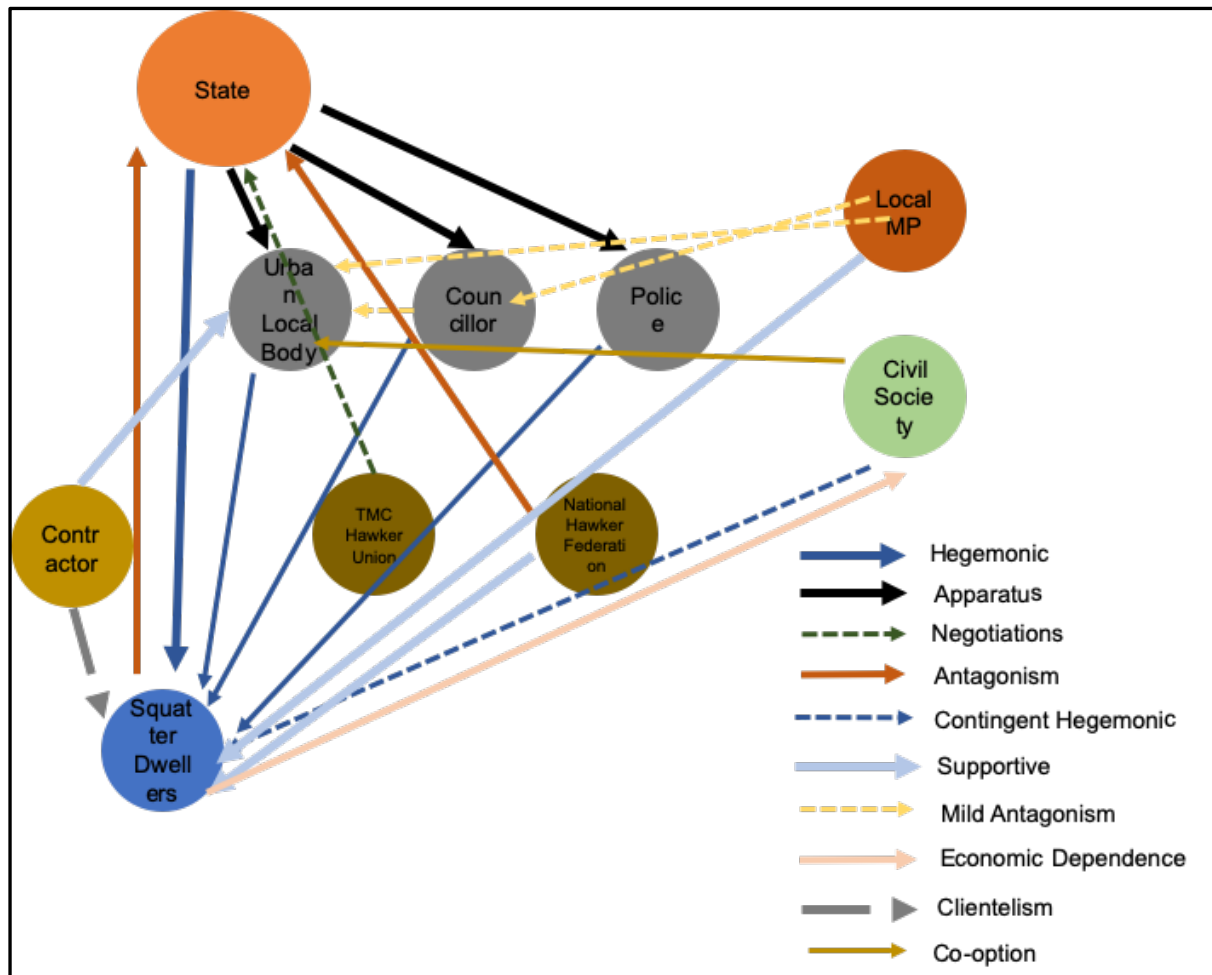


Figure 36 Power, Network and Actors, Salt Lake

5.5.4 Outcomes of Conflict Politics in Salt Lake

The anti-eviction movement in Salt Lake doesn't have any specific outcome in general. The partial rehabilitation in a state-sponsored occupation (ibid 5.3.4) was not a direct result of the movement. However, the movement managed to portray a resistance towards state violence and established the recognition of their rights. Currently, there is no immediate eviction threat. But minimising eviction threat cannot also be considered as an outcome of the movement. The state already knew they can't evict

people completely, but as there was the mega- event of U-17 world cup, for the time being, they wanted to 'clean' the city. After the world cup, things went back to 'normal'. This highlights two things. Firstly, living in urban margins in postcolonial cities is always precarious, and it coexists with a resistance to it. Secondly, the discursive nature of conflict politics is better understood through everyday occupation and autonomy, which creates a discursive political field with various political imaginations. This is an alternative habitus for the enactment of rights, access to urban resources and solidarity. By citing Gould (2009) Vasudevan (2015) states the alternative habitus provides a common spatial field where body, sentiments, ideas, values and practices operate and create a shared sense of inhabitation and modes of being (Vasudevan, 2015). It is also a spatial field which enables the postcolonial state to recognise rights for the people at the margins and feel threatened for their political survival.

5.5.5 Power Networks in Bhangar

In the case of Bhangar, the network is much more complex because of the involvement of several actors (figure 37). Here, initially, the state acted as a hegemonic entity through political domination, forceful acquisition and violence. However, the state also needed to retreat after an intensified countermovement by the villagers. The villagers even made some of the villages as state free zones. The opposition parties (CPIM and Congress) took this opportunity to practice their antagonism against the ruling party T.M.C. and made an ally with the *Jomi, Jibika, Bastutantra o Poribesh Rakkha Committee*. This was also capitalised by *Jomi, Jibika, Bastutantra o Poribesh Rakkha Committee* to form a broader solidarity network. The police, local tyrant and rural local body institution act as an apparatus of the state machinery and maintain a hegemonic relation with the political society. Here, the role of civil society is also different from Salt Lake, where they are supportive of the movement by political society (ibid 5.4.3). The role of land brokers is also very complex in this case. Though they are supportive of the movement, initially they were also involved in the capital accumulation process through land-use change. Their support for the movement is also based on the logic of capital accumulation. As they were sceptical about the impact of the power grid in diminishing land price, they wanted to shift the power grid from their investment region. At the grassroots level, the ruling party cadres were divided between the state's side and *Jomi, Jibika, Bastutantra o Poribesh Rakkha Committee's* side. The lobby against the local tyrant predominantly joined the movement to overthrow him, whereas his

loyal group stayed with him. Some of the ruling party cadres also joined the movement in fear of losing their livelihood. Though initially *Jomi, Jibika, Bastutantra o Poribesh Rakkha Committee* and the state had an antagonistic relationship, finally they agreed on a mutual negotiation strategy (details of this discussed in Pg. 178-179).

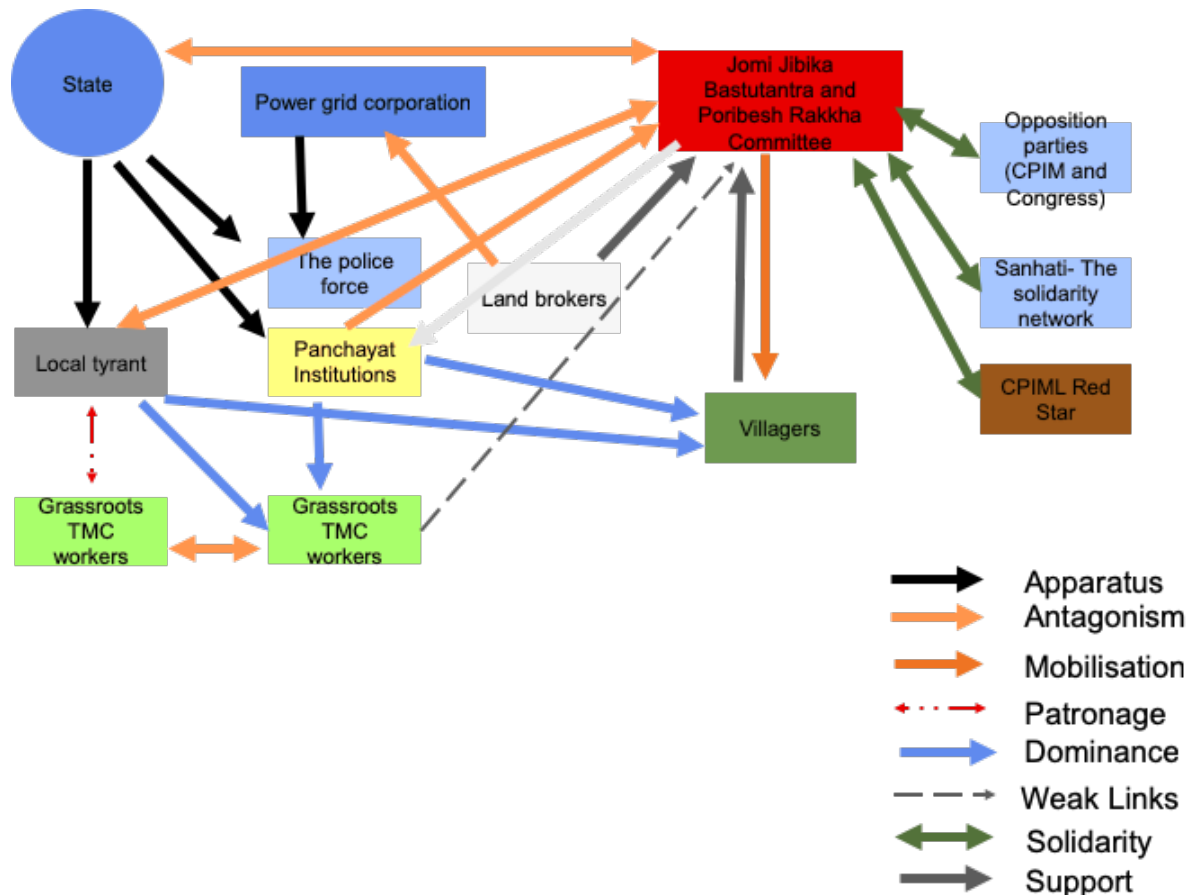


Figure 37 Network, Power and Actors, Bhangar

5.5.6 Outcome of Conflict Politics in Bhangar

Anti-power grid movement in Bhangar is essential to understand for various reasons. Firstly, it creates a discursive political field which threatens the postcolonial state through autonomous politics. Instead of being driven primarily on ideology, the autonomous politics adopted what Spivak (2012) calls 'strategic essentialism'. Irrespective of the difference of conflicting class interest or political identity people engaged in essentialising common interest, which in this case was anti-power grid

sentiment (Spivak, 2012). This autonomous politics finally enabled the state to include *Jomi Jibika Committee* for the decision-making process (ibid. 5.4.4).

Secondly, the movement is also innovative in the way it used technology, being fully aware how technology is also used to counter the movement through tracking of mobile towers. However, that does not stop them using social media and WhatsApp for the purpose of dissemination, mobilisation, solidarity and publicity. The leadership strategically trained the grassroots people to use, manage and capitalise technology.

Finally, there was a conscious effort to build a sense of ownership among the protesters. In the interview, they said it was an experiment to unleash people's highest democratic aspirations through building a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership was also translated into the cultural consciousness among the farmers. Numerous songs, poems, slogans, posters were written and designed by the farmers. These artefacts also helped the movement to catch broader political imagination and better positioning of the movement. This broader political imagination includes contesting the rural local body election and finally managed to win the election and send five representatives in the rural body.

The representation of power, network and actors for each case highlights three important things. Firstly, it demonstrates the heterogeneity of the relationship between the state and political society is influenced by the power networks, type of actors involved. This is not a unidirectional process; rather, they influence each other. Secondly, the everyday state acts through different capacities based on the context. This does not undermine the hegemonic influence and dominance of the state on its subaltern subjects. But it highlights how these hegemonic power relations are appropriated in each context. Finally, the discussion also shows the multiple identities of civil society which sometimes is absent (case 1), sometimes co-opts with the state (case 2) and sometimes against the state (case 3). This also helps to conceptualise the relationship between civil and political society more as a dynamic one.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The discussion of the above case studies shows three forms of urban margins and different circulation paths of postcolonial capitalism. The typologies of conflict politics

in each of these case studies show how people at the margins contest postcolonial capitalism. These various practices operate at different spatial scales by mobilising a variety of resources and infrastructures. The identification of resources and strategies are context-specific, and the mode of conflict politics is dependent on objectives. The table below compares three case studies and identifies differential trajectories of conflict politics.

Table 11 Differential Patterns of Conflict Politics

Parameters of Comparison	Urban Margin 1- Loomtex Mill	Urban Margin 2- Squatter Settlement of Salt Lake	Urban Margin 3- Bhangar
Characteristics of margin	Spatial stigmatisation, complex nexus between the state, mill management	Squatter settlements within the planned city	Peri-urban area, multiplicity of governance institutions
Nature of capital	Industrial capital and primitive accumulation through exploitation of workers	Environmental capital and dispossession through eviction	Land capital and accumulation through land-use change
Reasons for conflict	Unpaid due of worker's gratuity and P.F.	Eviction for organising U-17 football world cup	Forceful acquisition of land for proposed power grid
Actors involved	Mill workers, mill management, the local police station, trade unions, different political	Squatter dwellers, <i>Bidhannagar</i> Municipal Corporation, local MP, Elite Civil	Villagers, the local police station, land brokers, local tyrant and Panchayat

	parties (CPIM and T.M.C.), local tyrants	Society Group and the police	members, CPIML Red Star, Opposition parties of the state, Ruling party T.M.C.
Typologies of conflict politics	Negotiations, Direct antagonism, Mobilisation and Outreach, Fetishization of law	Occupancy, Patronage, Mobilisation through power networks, Negotiations	Politics of autonomy, Participation in electoral politics, Formal transactional through filing RTIs, Negotiations
Resource and infrastructure used	Mobilisation through neighbourhood politics; Utilising various spatial scales for outreach; Everyday negotiations	Formation of solidarity network with evicted hawkers; Navigation through different power networks	Creating anti-state vocabularies; Mobilisation through using technology (WhatsApp, Facebook); Creation of broader solidarity network; Involvement of opposition parties; Participation in electoral democracy

This chapter does three things. Firstly, it provides empirical support for the first two research questions (a and b *ibid* 1.3). By doing so, it establishes how heterogeneity is an essential part to theorise urban politics. It also challenges the binary conceptualisation of and state- political society relationship and establishes how complex this relationship is in relation to forms of capital, actors and strategies. This

comparative analysis between three case studies also helps to understand the multiplicity that exists in urban practices. Secondly, the comparative analysis of conflict politics in three case studies shows how conflict politics serve a strategic function of exertion of rights for the people at the margins of the state and to engage with the state through various kind relations. Simultaneously, unlike Chatterjee's (2011) theorisation the boundaries between the political and civil society and the postcolonial state is not static. Each case study exhibits different forms of engagements between them. This also highlights how constituency is an essential category to analyse postcolonial conflict politics. This constituent nature of politics sometimes acts as a signifier for postcolonial/ subaltern subjects who are necessarily located at the margins of the state. It also enables the postcolonial state to maintain its ambiguity and engage with political society in various ways. Finally, this chapter demonstrates how subaltern subjects navigate, manipulate and reproduce certain power networks. In this research, conflict politics signifies not only postcolonial praxis but also produce new subjects, i.e. metaphors, artefacts and relations to understand the postcolonial state. Hence, by incorporating the concept of conflict politics, this thesis deconstructs binary subjectivities about the postcolonial state and political society and opens up possibilities for a nuanced understanding of postcolonial urban politics through relational comparison.

6 Interconnected Trajectories of Spatial Adhocism

“Conceptualising space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the possibility of politics”- Doreen Massey, For Space

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter maps the heterogeneous practices that people at the margins operationalise to change the hegemonic power relations of the state. By doing so, it establishes conflict politics as a set of political relations which challenge the binary conceptualisation of dominance and resistance and constructs conflict as forms of different engagements between the state and political society. Here conflict politics acts as a signifier for subaltern subjects to understand their relationship with the postcolonial state. Following the arguments from the previous chapter on conflict politics, this chapter first showcases the spatial manifestation of these heterogeneous relationships in the context of Kolkata. Secondly, this chapter compares what kinds of adhoc arrangements are made both by the state as well by the political society across three case studies. Thirdly, this chapter also highlights the complex relationships between conflict politics and spatial adhocism, which is an essential component of postcolonial urbanism. Finally, this chapter argues that spatial adhocism is omnipresent in postcolonial city like Kolkata and theorises the urban through the methodological apparatus of spatial adhocism.

6.2 Precarious Living at the Urban Margins

“We use the petrol pump’s address as proof of address for our home. We have acquaintances in the nearby petrol pump. We used that address to make our Aadhaar cards” – Bapi, Interview Respondent

Bapi lives in the shanty near Rabindra Okakura Bhavan in Salt Lake. Like many other dwellers of the shanty, Bapi also migrated to Kolkata from a village. Similarly, like others, Bapi cannot furnish his proof of address in the city. Without this proof of address, Bapi cannot make an identity document in the city which would make any kind of municipal or state services inaccessible for him, even if there is a rehabilitation proposal in future. This situation compelled Bapi to acquire a Kolkata address and which he acquired through an ‘adhoc’ way. He mobilises his social capital and furnishes the address of the nearby petrol pump to get his Aadhaar card. He is also capable of navigating (through clientelism and bargaining, discussed in the previous chapter) across different power networks to claim his urban citizenship in Salt Lake through his acquired Aadhaar card. Here Aadhaar card becomes an apparatus for

Bapi's citizenship claims without which his claims for urban citizenship would not be validated. This Aadhaar card provides him partial legitimacy to stay in the squatter and also provides him with the opportunity to at least claim the right for rehabilitation after any eviction. The legitimacy is partial as with the help of an Aadhaar card Bapi can demonstrate his eligibility to urban citizenship. Bapi and other residents of that squatter talked about how the police during eviction asked for the copy of their Aadhaar cards to prove that they are not 'Bangladeshi immigrants'. Here, urban living is dependent on an ambiguous form of alternative governmentality (Srivastava, 2012). This serves two purposes. First, it enables Bapi to navigate across different networks. Secondly, it also helps the postcolonial state to re-establish its discipline and domination on the subjects living in urban margins. For Srivastava (2012), this alternative governmentality is 'topographies of deception'. Sriraman (2018) looks at it as 'trapdoors of entitlement for urban poor' where these ID documents sometimes act as a proof of nationality, sometimes their spatial identity and sometimes as means to claim urban citizenship.

At this juncture, the idea of citizenship is constructed through difference as lack of an Aadhaar card distances people from accessing urban resources and claiming their urban citizenship. Here Aadhaar card for Bapi enables the idea of 'differentiated citizenship' (Holston, 2008). Bapi's example allows us to explore how the narrative of spatiality for people at the margins is constructed through adhocism in postcolonial cities. Bapi's adaptation of adhocism is a result of the urgency of his situation and an attempt to appropriate his spatiality. His spatiality is an unfinished project which continuously transcends the fixity of space. This spatiality creates taxonomies of spatiality between real and narrated addresses (Sriraman, 2018). This also shows how spatiality is constructed through the multiplicity of relations between human and non-human elements (here documents). It is also important to explore how documents construct spatial narratives and citizenship claims. Here documents are essential artefacts for spatiality. As Sriraman (2018) notes, ID documents are discursive fields of politics through their presence as well as absence and they create categories of bodies, identities and citizenships. She states, "Identification documents function simultaneously to reinforce the state as an arbiter of people's welfare claims and render it liable to popular manifestations" (Sriraman, 2018: xxix). Similarly, Hull (2012), based on his work in urban Pakistan, shows how documents create a variety of

informal associations. In the context of Islamabad Hull that notes governing the papers are synonymous to the governing of the city. The papers construct, transform and modify identity, citizenship and spatiality. As Latour says (2005:39) “To analytically restore the visibility of documents, to look at rather than through them, is to treat them as mediators, things that “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (Cited in Hull, 2012: 13). In the case study of Salt Lake, Bapi constructs his spatial identity through navigating across power networks, mobilising his social capital, which enables him to exert his rights over urban space. However, Bapi also knows the precarity of his spatial identity as he is standing on the verge of eviction, an eviction like many others in his life. Each eviction can be read as Bapi’s life history, the violence on his body, loss of belongings and failure of his mobilisation strategies. For him, each eviction is an assemblage of distorted spatial identities. After each eviction, Bapi would again reappropriate his spatial identity through adhoc practices. For him, these adhoc practices include occupancy of space, making clientelist arrangements through state apparatus, negotiations and bargaining. Through this reappropriation, he creates what Sriraman (2018) calls as ‘different order of ID documents’ where urban existence becomes part of ‘differentiated legality’. Here law acts as a residual category for disruption (Das, 2011). The conceptualisation of ‘differentiated legality’ will be further explained in the following sections through the examples from three case studies.

Urban informality has been well explored in the context of postcolonial cities (Alsayyad and Roy, 2004; Gilbert, 2007; Kudva, 2009; Varley, 2013). It is also argued that urban practices in the postcolonial world should be analysed beyond the binary construction of formality and informality (Kudva, 2009; Varley, 2013; Ranganathan, 2014; McFarlane, 2019). Alsayyad and Roy (2004) argue informality needs to be conceptualised as transactional relationships between individual, institutions and within institutions. Similarly, Ranganathan (2014) sees this as a negotiated process. She states “I define informality as the flexible and uneven suspension of regulation and law in the production of urban space and materiality” (Ranganathan, 2014: 90). Though informality is described as a transactional relationship between the state and the subaltern subjects often state practices of informality are missing from the analysis. Goodfellow’s (2019) analysis brings the state to the heart of informal politics He develops a typology of informality and states, that the state is in continuous

transformation. In his analysis of informality, the temporal aspect is often missing as informality is mainly conceptualised through spatiality. However, Bapi's case at the beginning of this section shows the temporal aspect of his practice. Simultaneously, the empirics from three case studies also show how certain state practices outside legality influence the relationship between the state and political society. The postcolonial urban requires new vocabularies to capture the multiplicity of urban outcomes. In this thesis the concept of spatial adhocism contributes to these new vocabularies for the postcolonial urban. It does so, in three ways. Firstly, spatial adhocism rejects the categorisation between formal and informal and focuses on practices and urban outcome of those practices. Secondly, it brings the state to the centre of the discussion and demonstrates how the state practices adhoc arrangements. Finally, this framework also discusses practices both from spatial and temporal perspectives. To do so, the next section unpacks the idea of adhocism.

6.3 What is Adhoc in Spatial Ahocism

In 2011 Indo American Arts Council organised an architectural exhibition, curated by Kanu Agarwal called '*Jugaad Urbanism: Resourceful Strategies for Indian Cities*'. This defines '*Jugaad Urbanism*' as the inventive strategies by citizens through a 'making do' approach for sustainable urban growth (Indo American Arts Council, 2011).

जुगाड़
Jugaad
Urbanism
Resourceful
strategies for
Indian cities



Figure 38 Jugaad Urbanism

Source: Indo American Arts Council and Google Images

Jugaad is a low-cost quadricycle used in rural north India for transportation purpose. Jugaad uses the engine of agricultural irrigation pumps, a body of a hand-driven van. It is usually used for the transportation of agricultural products, humans and livestock. Jugaad means making do arrangements with limited resources and has a purposeful use. The exhibition describes 'jugaad urbanism' challenges the "traditional spatial hierarchies and mechanistic planning principles" (Indo American Arts Council, 2011). Here, 'Jugaad urbanism' represents a parochial narrative of subaltern subjects and postcolonial urbanism. It portrays making do arrangements as impromptu solutions. The conceptualisation of 'Jugaad urbanism' is also a subtle attempt to simplify postcolonial complexities (Roy, 2014). Hence it undermines the strategic interventions by subaltern subjects and their ability for emancipation and social change. The symptomatic silence about adhoc interventions by the state in the narrative of 'jugaad urbanism' is also one of its limitations. At this juncture, by critically examining this parochial narrative, I propose spatial adhocism as a framework to unpack the complex and often fluid relationship between the postcolonial state and political society. It highlights how the postcolonial state is also a constitutive part of adhocism. In doing so, it establishes how subaltern subjects claim their 'insurgent citizenship' in the postcolonial city of Kolkata. The next section critically examines the origin of adhocism.

6.3.1 Adhoc Geographies

In 2014 the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference organised sessions on 'Ad Hoc Geographies' which focuses on 'spontaneous co-production of materials. The papers in the sessions focused on different improvisation strategies, participatory designs, sustainable consumption etc. and established adhocism as not only an approach but also a product and a process. However, the use of the word adhocism can be traced back to 1972 in a book 'Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation' published by Charles Jencks' and Nathan Silver. For them, adhocism denotes radical and hybrid actions which serve a purpose (Jencks and Silver, 2013). Adhocism is also open and hybrid as it is an assemblage of heterogeneous materials and have a transformative potential (Martin, 2016). Jencks and Silver (2013) also identify adhocism as part of revolutionary politics because of its pluralistic nature and spontaneous action to the direct need of the circumstances. By citing Boguslaw (1965), Martin (2014) states, adhocism is not paradigmatic rather only deployed at a specific circumstance when no other solution is available. It shows the momentary

nature of adhocism. For him, adhocism is dynamic as change is continuous and creates new formations over time or forms new interactions with 'unexpected others' (Martin, 2014). Martin (2014) also identifies two inherent characteristics of adhocism: inventiveness and transferability. Adhoc is inventive as it creates new materiality through the assemblage of heterogeneous elements. It is also transferable as it always has the "potential of things to become something else". Martin (2016) also distinguishes between two kinds of adhocism- practical adhocism and intentional adhocism. Practical adhocism operates through needs and often involves impromptu solutions. It is procedural in nature and spatially localised in nature. Whereas intentional adhocism is aspirational and goal-driven (Martin, 2016).

Some other literature centred around adhocism explain adhocism as DIY adjustments of space (Mould, 2014), the material assemblage of urban ordinary (Hunt, 2016) and brokerage (Jeffrey and Young, 2014). Mould's (2014) work on tactical urbanism critically looks into the community-driven, subversive, unsanctioned activities outside the normative planning model. He looks at how these 'interventionist' practices are often reproducing neoliberal urban agendas and become a politically mobile agenda. Mould's (2014) argument can also be applicable to the context of previously described 'Jugaad urbanism'. The repackaging of variety of making do arrangements under the umbrella of 'creative city' or 'DIY urbanism' attempts to politically neutralise the complex and subversive politics of counter-hegemony that exists within some of these practices. Hunt's (2016) entry point to urban adhoc practices is adhoc shops in London. Her visual ethnographic study primarily looks into the how race, body, urban temporality and materials intersect with each other through these shops. However, her analysis fails to look into the subversive politics that these shops play and the state's reaction to these subversive politics. Jeffery and Young's (2014) study on entrepreneurship of Dalit youths in India positions jugaad as the adhoc arrangement for brokerage. Their study also indicates how the state also adopts jugaad ways to implement neoliberal policies. Following Bourdieu's (2001) habitus, they define 'jugaad' as 'durable disposition'. This study shows the interplay between social structure and people's creative forms appropriation in a changed economic situation. They state "Crucially, however, the habitus is not a fixed repertoire of actions and tastes. Rather, it is, to use Bourdieu's phrase, a generative mechanism: People inventively reproduce their social position through their everyday practices" (Jeffrey

and Young, 2014: 185). For Jeffery and Young (2014) 'jugaad' as a portable improvisation mechanism becomes an identity for survival.

I acknowledge the importance of studies related to adhocism as it engages with multiple socio-spatial subjectivities. Though the majority of them do not describe these practices as adhoc, however these studies indicate quasi-permanent practices which exists in postcolonial cities (and also London). However, I take a departure from these conceptualisations of adhocism. I situate adhocism in everyday life through repetitive and habitual practices. This thesis defines spatial adhocism as spatial manifestation of conflict politics. As shown earlier (chapter 5) conflict politics are heterogeneous relationships, their spatial manifestations also represent multiple subjectivities. At this juncture, I construct spatial adhocism as quasi-permanent state-community relations for the mobilisation of resources outside legality. Here, spatial adhocism is not a well-defined theoretical category; rather, it is incomplete through its precariousness; hybrid through various assemblages of power, resources and contingent spatial practices and relational through its dynamicity and contextuality.

Spatial adhocism operates not only from below but the postcolonial state also adopts certain practices of spatial adhocism to rehabilitate the dispossessed in the urban margins for its political survival. Sometimes spatial adhocism also helps the accumulation of capital without being fully registered. At the same time, people at the urban margins use spatial adhocism to exert their rights to cities, to claim their citizenship, sometimes even to engage with the state in conflict politics. At this juncture, I construct spatial adhocism as the heterogeneity of practices involving multiple socio-spatial identities with the help of examples from the three case studies. Spatial adhocism operates through urgency and reappropriation of spaces. For Jencks and Silver (2013), adhocism is the celebration of creativity, resistance towards the normative and heroic representation of the ordinary. Without denouncing these characteristics of adhocism, my proposition is more nuanced. Spatial adhocism as practice is certainly innovative as it has the potential to alter hegemonic socio-spatial relationships. Simultaneously spatial adhocism also symbolises precariousness, subtle violence and accumulation of postcolonial capital. Spatial adhocism also sometimes reduces the chance of engagement in conflict politics for the people at the urban margins because of its subtle nature. Here spatial adhocism becomes a

circulatory field of various forms of practices and relationships, spatial reappropriation and power structures. Sometimes they are hierarchical, sometimes they are counter-hegemonic, and sometimes they become a constitutive form of the fluid identity of the postcolonial state and political society. In the discussion of circulatory forms, Goankar and Povinelli (2003) encourages us to look into mobility and mutability rather than specificity. The previous chapter maps the specificity that exists in different forms of relationships between the state and the people at the margins. Through interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism that exist in the three case studies, this chapter looks into how spatial adhocism is omnipresent and forms of mobility and transferability through urgency and reappropriation of socio-spatial subjectivities. Here adhocism becomes an archive of postcolonial incompleteness. This incompleteness can be interpreted as the experience of double perception of space which is ambiguous and complex with different layers of knowledge, illusive boundaries between the state and the political society; parts are hidden, and parts are exposed; often oscillates between stability and precariousness.

The next section discusses these conceptual categorisations of adhocism with the help of empirics from three case studies in Kolkata.

6.4 Interconnected Trajectories of Spatial Adhocism

The previous chapter highlights how different geo histories of the case studies shape differential forms of conflict politics. The form of conflict politics is differential because of varied relationships between the postcolonial state and the people at the margins; involvement of a variety of actors through different power networks; a variety of resource, infrastructure and mobilisation strategies. By formulating conflict politics as a methodological apparatus, the previous chapter gives an entry point to theorise postcolonial urbanism. Whereas, this chapter escalates the arguments on postcolonial urbanism by showing how adhocism is an inherent component of postcolonial subjectivity. Spatial adhocism operates at different spatial scales but utilises spatial resources. Depending on the type of actors involved in the performance of adhocism, this research analyses and conceptualises spatial adhocism under four broad typologies- urgency, mutability, indeterminacy and emergence. Each of these typologies showcases various forms of quasi-permanent spatial practices (spatial

adhocism). It does so, by citing examples from each of the case studies which is discussed in the next section.

6.4.1 Urgency:

The first typology of spatial adhocism is urgency. For this thesis, urgency means the instantaneous ability to transform or mobilise resources and utilisation of power networks in a given situation. This sometimes allows the postcolonial state or its apparatus to minimise conflict politics or at least to reduce the impact of conflict politics. This form of spatial adhocism is visible in the case of Loomtex mill where the mill management operationalises gate bahar or sudden closure of mill to intimidate workers or to minimise the possibility of conflict politics by the workers. Urgency is also used by the political society in the case of Bhangar to involve in an antagonistic relationship with the state. Here urgency arises from the need for self- defence.

Example1- Gate Bahar: One of the frequently used common practices by the mill management is to 'gate bahar' the workers. It is discussed earlier (ibid 140) 'Gate bahar' means temporary suspension by curtailing working rights for the workers for an indefinite time period without serving him/her any notice. This is used as a common intimidation technique by the management. When a worker is 'gate bahar' he/she doesn't receive any wages, and it is also difficult for them to predict when they can join work again as it is a practice of unlimited temporary suspension.

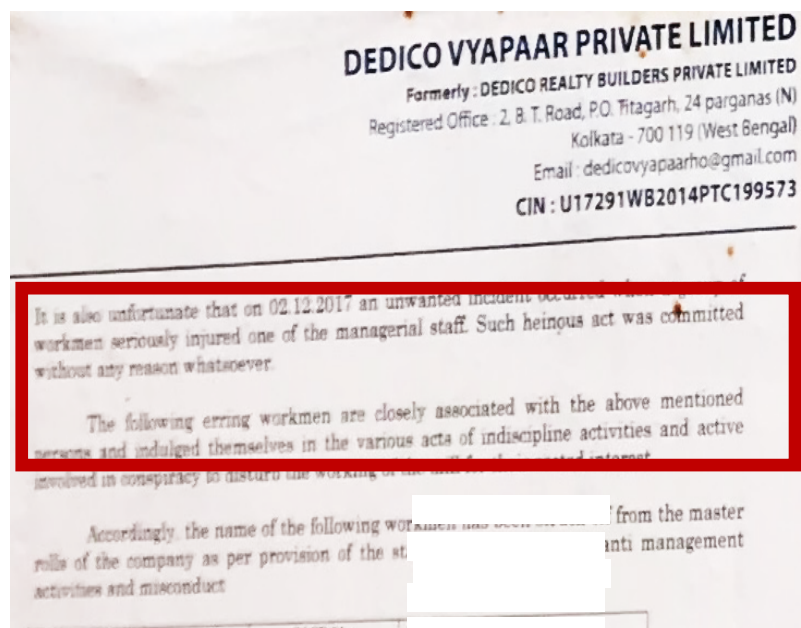


Figure 39 Gate Bahar Notice

The above picture (Figure 39) shows a 'gate bahar' notice on the mill gate for temporary suspension of 8 workers. As a reason for 'gate bahar', the management mentioned:

"various acts of indiscipline activities and active involved in conspiracy to disturb the working of the mill for their vested interest" (sic.).

This statement related to gate bahar from management's side (fig. 39) indicates fictitious allegations like 'indiscipline activities' and conspiracy are used against workers to curtail their working rights. My conversation with the trade union leaders also shows this.

Leader 3: Three of their members are 'gate bahar' now.

Me: But why they did that to these three people?

Leader 3: No reasons.

Leader 2: The management closed the mill. Suddenly they closed the mill, and we saw a notice at the gate that 8 people are 'gate bahar'.

Me: Why have they selected these 8 people?

Leader 2: No reasons. They are also not understanding why their names are there. They have taken back 5 people. Till now they kept those 3 outside.

When asked for the reason of his temporary suspension one of the 'gate bahar' workers Asif says

"I raised my voice for the violence against workers in the last meeting. I am also an active member of Sangrami Majdoor Union. They threatened me last time saying I am speaking much nowadays. When the mill reopened, I found my name in the notice (fig.39)".

Asif being an active member of Sangrami Majdoor Union, continuously gets involved in the protest, voicing worker's demands and mobilising workers during a protest. The relationship between the new mill management and Sangrami Majdoor Union deteriorated (as discussed in the earlier chapter) because the negotiations process failed. So, Asif's gate bahar for an indefinite time period can also be read as a mechanism to intimidate Sangrami Majdoor Union by the management. By excluding Asif from shop floor activities, the management also attempts to curtail the process of

worker's mobilisation to voice their demand. This is also an attempt to establish discipline and domination in the shop floor politics by setting up Asif's case as an example of indiscipline and the costs of such indiscipline. This adhoc process to curtail worker's right through gate bahar can be read as what Guha (1997) calls as 'dominance without hegemony'. 'Dominance without hegemony' can be interpreted as the existence of disciplinary power without fully subsuming the identity of the subordinate (Guha, 1997). This incident shows 'gate bahar' is spatial as well as a temporal adhoc practice. The temporal dimension comes from the precariousness of the worker's right to work. The duration of the 'indefinite' suspension of work primarily depends on when the worker is agreed to give consent to the management's clauses. In the spatial context, gate bahar deploys certain kind of spatial politics within the shop floor. The reshaping of this spatial politics represents a more skewed relationship between the worker and mill management where mill management capitalises on this form of adhocism by making the worker's condition more precarious and minimises their bargaining power.

Example 2- Sudden Mill Closure: Another adhoc mechanism adopted by the mill management which operates at the shop floor level is sudden mill closure. Whenever there is an intense labour agitation the management suddenly close mill operations for an indefinite time period. This mill closure can be also be seen as curtailing working rights for the workers. After the murder of the mill manager in 2008, the mill was closed for 4 months. The mill was again closed in 2018 for 15 days after minor violence during the meeting with the Provident Fund commissioner. This clearly shows that the mill management uses mill closure as an adhoc mechanism to minimises the chances of conflict politics. This is also an attempt to control the production process by deciding mill operation time and hence alters the socio-spatial relations by denouncing worker's right to work. However, it is also not certain that this strategy worked all the time. During 2008's mill closures Sangrami Majdoor Union continued their protest outside the closed gate of the mill and adjacent roads. This also gave the protest higher visibility.

Example 3- Sudden Stalling of Land Registration and Mutation process: Immediately after the anti-power grid movement started, the Panchayat stopped land registration and mutation process for unknown reasons. In an informal conversation,

the Block Development Officer mentions that access to land maps in the area would be difficult as the registration and mutation process is not taking place. In my interview, the villagers also agreed that the entire process of registration and land conversion is not taking place in Block 2 of Bhangar panchayat. My conversation with Hafiz, the local tyrant, also indicated this.

Hafiz: Now in Bhangar 2 number Block we stopped all land mutation (Mutation is the change of title ownership from one person to another when the land/property is sold or transferred), conversion process.

Me: Why it was stopped?

Hafiz: Because of the power grid movement. It's been a year now.

Me: So, no land transactions are happening?

Hafiz: No no, everything is happening. Only the mutation is stalled.

Me: Ok.

Other People: Conversion, mutation both are stalled now.

The land registration and mutation process were deliberately stopped to reduce the chances of intensified conflicts related to the land conversion process. As Hafiz indicates the mutation process was immediately stalled after the power grid movement, it shows a connection between these two events. A possible reason for stopping the process could be to intimidate the land brokers and to discourage them from supporting the movement. By stalling the mutation process, the Panchayat wanted to curtail the land dealings by the brokers and tried to intimidate them and sent them a message that their support to protesters would cost them economically. By doing so, it deploys dominance in the socio-spatial relations around the land in that area. This sudden stalling is also temporal as there is no clear indication when it would start again.

Example 4- Violation of Power Grid Corporation Manuel: The proposed project violated the regulations designed by the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL). The leaders of *Jami Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha* Committee repeatedly mention that this kind of project is not allowed in a densely populated area. Along with that they also think the high voltage transmission lines could be dangerous

if there are any brick kilns. The locality has a couple of brick kilns. The power grid project was previously planned near Rajarhat, and allegedly the real estate lobby of that area didn't allow it as it would reduce the appreciation of land prices. To avoid a similar situation, the state shifted the project location to Bhangar. Here adhocism enables the postcolonial state to bypass the regulation and reduce conflict.

Example 5- Secret Weapon: Another kind of adhocism that is present in Bhangar can be observable in selecting mechanism for conflict politics by the members of *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha Committee*. The image (Fig. 40) shows where a member of the committee is holding a placard before going to a procession.

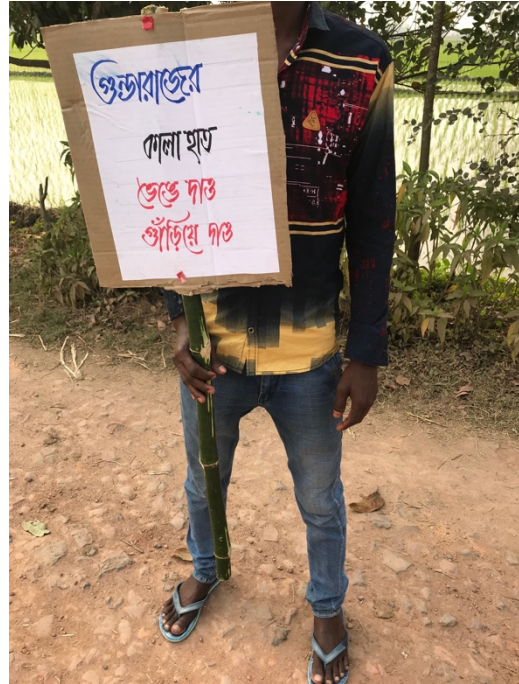


Figure 40 Secret Weapon

Because of prior information about street violence, the committee designed the placard in such a way that it can be used as a secret weapon if required. As per the penal code of India, public procession with a display of weapon can be a punishable offence. Here to make the placard, they used green bamboo sticks which are normally used in mob violence. This, in a way, helps them to bypass the rule and also allows them to create a mechanism for self-defence. This is adhoc because this shows an assemblage of body, material and actions and also enables the committee to act in case of any urgency for self-defence.

This analysis of spatial adhocism through urgency indicates that both the state and the political society adopt spatial adhocism. The first two practices are prevalent in case study 1 of Loomtex mill whereas, the last three practices are there in case study 3 of Bhangar movement. Any practice of spatial adhocism through urgency is missing in the case study 2 of Salt Lake eviction. Though each of these practices has different objectives, infrastructure and different networks of power for operationalisation; together they indicate instantaneous ability to transform.

6.4.2 Mutability

The second typology of spatial adhocism is mutability. Here, mutability refers to spatial reappropriation. This reappropriation involves changing the characteristics of space through land conversion or changing socio-spatial relationships. Mutability as a form of spatial adhocism is present in all three case studies and is operationalised by the state, political society as well as mutually by the state and political society. For the postcolonial state, mutability is practised to accumulate capital without being fully registered and hence minimises the occurrence of conflict politics. People at the urban margins use mutability to occupy spaces and subsequently exert their rights over the urban. At the intersections, the postcolonial state deploys selective allowance of rights for the dispossessed for their political survival.

Example 1- Occupancy of Mill: In my interview, Laksman states that the mill was occupied overnight in 2016 when the new management took over the mill. He also says the change of ownership was done silently because the legal status of the new company DEDICO was ambiguous. Remembering that incident union leader, Nazeem tells:

“Even when the mill was captured, we came to know just 2 hours before. We were told whatever we need to do; we need to do it within 2 hours. People escaped from the mill at night. The roof of one side was taken down. There was barricade at the gate so nobody could enter. But the most interesting thing was when they captured this big factory, there were no troubles. They just captured it so easily.”

Repeatedly in my interviews, the workers express their doubts about the institutional identity of DEDICO. There is no website or any kind of information available for the company. The google search of DEDICO reveals the following information:

“DEDICO Vyapaar Private Limited is a Private incorporated on 17 January 2014. It is classified as Non-govt company and is registered at Registrar of Companies, Kolkata. Its authorized share capital is Rs. 4,500,000 and its paid-up capital is Rs. 100,000. It is involved in manufacture of other textiles. Dedico Vyapaar Private Limited's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was last held on 25 September 2017 and as per records from Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), its balance sheet was last filed on 31 March 2017. Directors of Dedico Vyapaar Private Limited are Sambhu Pramanik, Lalit Kumar, Sukhdev Singh.....Its registered address is 2, B. T. Road P. O. Titagarh, 24 Parganas, Kolkata, Parganas North WB” (sic.) (DEDICO Vyapaar Pvt. Ltd., no date).

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Anglo-India Jute Mills Co. Ltd.,	18, Netaji Subhas Road (North) Calcutta-700001 Ph.No.2205811/2	Ph.No.2205811/2
Angus Jute Works	9, India Exch. Place(3rd Floor) Calcutta- 700001	Ph.No.248-3190/5579
Auckland International Ltd.	6, Little Russel Street Calcutta- 700071	Ph.No.248-3190/5579
The Baranagore Jute Factory PLC	284,Maharaja Nanda Kumar Road(N) Alambazar, Calcutta- 700035	Ph. No: 5578248/8103/7139/5497
West Bengal Agro Textiles Corpn. Ltd.	Chatterjee International Center 33A, J.L.Nehru Rd., Calcutta-1	Ph. No.: 293722/23
Birla Corporation Ltd.	Birla Building 9/1 R.N.Mukherjee Road, Calcutta-1	Ph. No: 2201680/2380
Ambica Multifibres Ltd. (Bally Jute Mills)	3 Haren Mukherjee Road, Belur Math Howrah-711202	Ph. No: 6546224/6730
Soorah Jute Mills	Birla Building 9/1 R.N.Mukherjee Road Calcutta-1	Ph. No: 2201680/2380
Budge Budge Co. Ltd.	16a, Brabourne Road, 9th Floor Calcutta-1	Ph. No: 255637/5781
The Calcutta Jute Mfg. Co. Ltd.	20, Old Court House St. Calcutta- 700001	Ph. No: 2483960
Loomtex Engineering (Private) Ltd. Licencee of Caledonian Jute & Industries Ltd.	64, K.B.M. Road, Champdany Hooghly- 712222	Ph. No: 2424666/4607/9609

Figure 41 Loomtex Listed in Jute Corporation Website

The address given for the company registration is similar to the address of the jute mill, which means the company doesn't have any separate office. Interviews with workers also indicate that DEDICO does not have any dedicated registration number at the Provident Fund office. Even the Jute Commissioner's office (Govt. of India) website also uses the name Loomtex along with the mention of "licensee of Caledonian Jute and Industries limited" (Fig. 41). However, the name Caledonian Jute and Industries limited never came up in discussions with the workers, and the name is also not visible anywhere in the industrial complex. This ambiguity around the name of the company raises doubt about the actual existence of the company and its ownership status. The workers suspect the management has no legal license to run the mill except a trade license from the municipality. The scale of operation of an industry such as a jute mill is beyond the municipality's jurisdiction and license issuing power. The trade license can only allow them to trade not manufacture. The new management overthrew the previous management with the help of the local tyrant and 'blessings' from the local MLA (who was earlier affiliated to T.M.C. but very recently shifted to the right-wing party B.J.P.). These all indicate that the company only exists in paper and maybe is a fictitious. This institutional ambiguity helps the state to silently

sponsor exploitation by the management through local political networks. This happens in three ways. Firstly, without the proper paper needed to run an industry the state is still allowing Loomtex to function. Allegedly, local political leaders of the ruling T.M.C. receive monthly bribes for not questioning the legal status of the industry. With their ambiguity the management can also bypass certain worker's right. This ambiguity in terms of license allegedly does not give any legal status to DEDICO, which further restricted them from acquiring a P.F. number. They can embezzle the P.F. money any time without any legal consequences. Many workers suspect this can happen any time. A worker from the mill Farooq states:

Farooq: We went to the P.F. commissioner at Barrackpore. We asked questions about Loomtex. They said the money deposited by the last owner had been seized. The new owner has no connection with it.

Me: Why was it seized?

Farooq: Court cases are continuing in the high court. They haven't deposited the money. Loomtex was supposed to give Rs. Nine lakh/month to PLC for running the mill. They still have to give that money. We went to the P.F. commissioner. She said for the last two years the company is running the mill without a license. She asked me whether my P.F. money is getting deducted. Then she checked with my P.F. number and Aadhar car number My details are there, but no money was deposited in it. For some workers, even those details are also not there. She advised us to talk to the company for submitting P.F. number and Aadhar card. Then only she can link it. After that linking, we can check that in our bank account. The commissioner told us that it is getting deposited. I asked her whether there is any P.F. audit. Without P.F. audit, how you are allowing these deposits? They don't have a license. They got a separate code number There was a code with the earlier owner. She said now each worker should have separate P.F. code.

This statement from Farooq indicates certain kind of discrepancy regarding P.F. account and deposit of P.F. money. This is also happening without any fact-checking by state institutions. Allegedly as the management has paid bribes to the local politicians from the ruling party and the state tries to overlook the legality status of the mill owners. This depicts how the postcolonial state attempts to safeguard the capitalist interests and allows the accumulation of postcolonial capital. Spatiotemporally, this occupation has two connotations. Firstly, the occupation of the shop floor by the new management of DEDICO allows them to take control over the production system by muscle power, and they also abandoned the agreement made

by the previous management for gradual sanction of unpaid dues. This hegemonic appropriation of power through occupancy intensifies the dispossession of the workers and hence skews the socio-spatial relations in the shop floor. This occupancy is hegemonic as it also displays the capacity of the new management to mobilise local tyrants and political leaders and creates a sense of fear among the workers. Many workers in my interview express their fear that they are weak in front of the huge 'machinery' of the management. Secondly, the occupancy of the shop floor enables the new management to operate with their dubious institutional identity. Spatiotemporally this can be treated as 'permanent temporariness' where after almost three years of operation there is no certainty of their ownership and legal status. The workers fear that this 'permanent temporariness' allows the management to curtail the mill operation suddenly and would run away one day by embezzling all the money. Here, this kind of adhocism increases the precariousness of the worker's working right, allows the management to change the socio-spatial relations through hegemony and domination and also enables them to accumulate postcolonial capital without obtaining full registration.

However, this is not the first time that the mill has been occupied. In our conversation, one of the workers Rajiv states that the mill was also occupied in the 1980's. But that time the mill was occupied by the CITU (Centre of Indian Trade Unions) which is affiliated to Communist Party of India (Marxist). The postcolonial state was also very much present in that occupation. The left front was in power in West Bengal state and CITU was their trade union wing, the presence of the postcolonial state cannot be ignored in that occupation. Although at the beginning the purpose of occupation was to run the mill as a cooperative by the trade unions. Rajiv states the mill was run as a cooperative only for Nine months by the CITU. He, along with two more workers state that in spite of having good intentions, this cooperative model failed. Even the workers used to receive lower wages at that time. Initially, the workers were promised that they would get the part of the profits. However, Rajiv states that except trade union leaders, no general workers received any share of the profit. However, CITU (being the then ruling party's trade union) acted more like a hegemonic entity in the process of occupation which eventually failed to run the mill as a cooperative.

Example 2- Subtle conversion of land for commercial use: This kind of adhocism operationalised by the mill management is through the reappropriation of industrial land. Here the reappropriation happens through the conversion of land for non-industrial uses for profit maximisation and hence converting dead capital to liquid capital. The entire mill area is approximately 0.86 sq. km. of land. Out of which the factory occupies 20% of the land. During the colonial time, some of the lands were also utilised for the construction of bungalows for the officers (Fig. 42 L2).

The rest of the land is either vacant or dilapidated (Fig. 42 L1). The mill management converted some of the land for varied commercial use (L2 and R2).



L1



R1



L2



R2

Figure 42 Varied Land-use changes within mill compound

The earlier officers' bungalows are now used for commercial purposes. The interview with workers suggests these bungalows are now rented for film shootings and marriage parties, whereas some of the vacant lands have been converted to various

commercial use (Fig 42 L2, R1 and R2). The L2 shows the existing bungalows which are currently rented for film shootings and marriage parties, whereas R1 and R2 show the inexplicit commercial use. The board for this establishment states “all kinds of automobile works are done here”. Although the board says, the space is used for car servicing; however, visibly



Figure 43 Entry Gate for the Car Servicing Place

there is a complete absence of such kind of activities in the space (Fig 42 R1). The entry (Fig. 43) looks like a gated compound, which is not very usual for a car servicing place.

No one is clear about the nature of commercial activity of the property. Some say it is used as a showroom; some say this is a warehouse. This entrance gate of this property is always closed, and I couldn't find anyone near the property to have a conversation. This clearly shows the dubious nature of the establishment. Being an automobile repair shop, the gates are always closed and peeping through the gate shows lack of activities (fig. 42 R1). This adhocism serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows the management to convert industrial lands for commercial use and hence gives the management the chance to maximise profits through other means than industrial operations. Secondly, as the workers are not sure about the status and nature of conversion, this adhocism potentially reduces the scope for any labour movement based on this issue. Here adhocism serves as a counterstrategy to conflict politics.

Example 3- Occupancy of Worker's Quarter: In the case of Loomtex, adhocism at the intersection happens through neighbourhood tyrants and clubs as a relationship of patronage. It has been already discussed how neighbourhood clubs shape micropolitics of the neighbourhood (ibid. 5.6.1). Allotment of the worker's quarter is usually done in a suspicious way. The workers in that area express that firstly, the provision of quarters is inadequate for the entire workforce of the mill. As a result, not

everyone has access to it. The access to the worker's quarter depends on people's ability to manoeuvre across different networks of power. In my interview, the respondents say that non-workers now occupy almost 40% of the quarters. When asked about how the occupancy works, Laksman says the following:

Laksman: Yes, that has a calculation. Say for the brother has given me the key. If my family is big, I will put my family there. If my family is small, I will give that to my neighbour who requires it. They take Rs.10,000 or Rs. 20,000 for allowing them to stay in that quarter. While giving it is also mentioned that if there is any inquiry, people need to leave this. This has also happened.

Me: What is the process to do that?

Laksman: That depends on who is powerful in that area. If I am a goon and I have power, the power gets utilised.

He further elaborates this by saying, usually clubs try to identify the vacant quarters in that neighbourhood and finally capture them either by providing bribe or by intimidation. The process which is usually followed to occupy worker's quarter on behalf of a non-worker or even for other workers is shown in the following diagram.

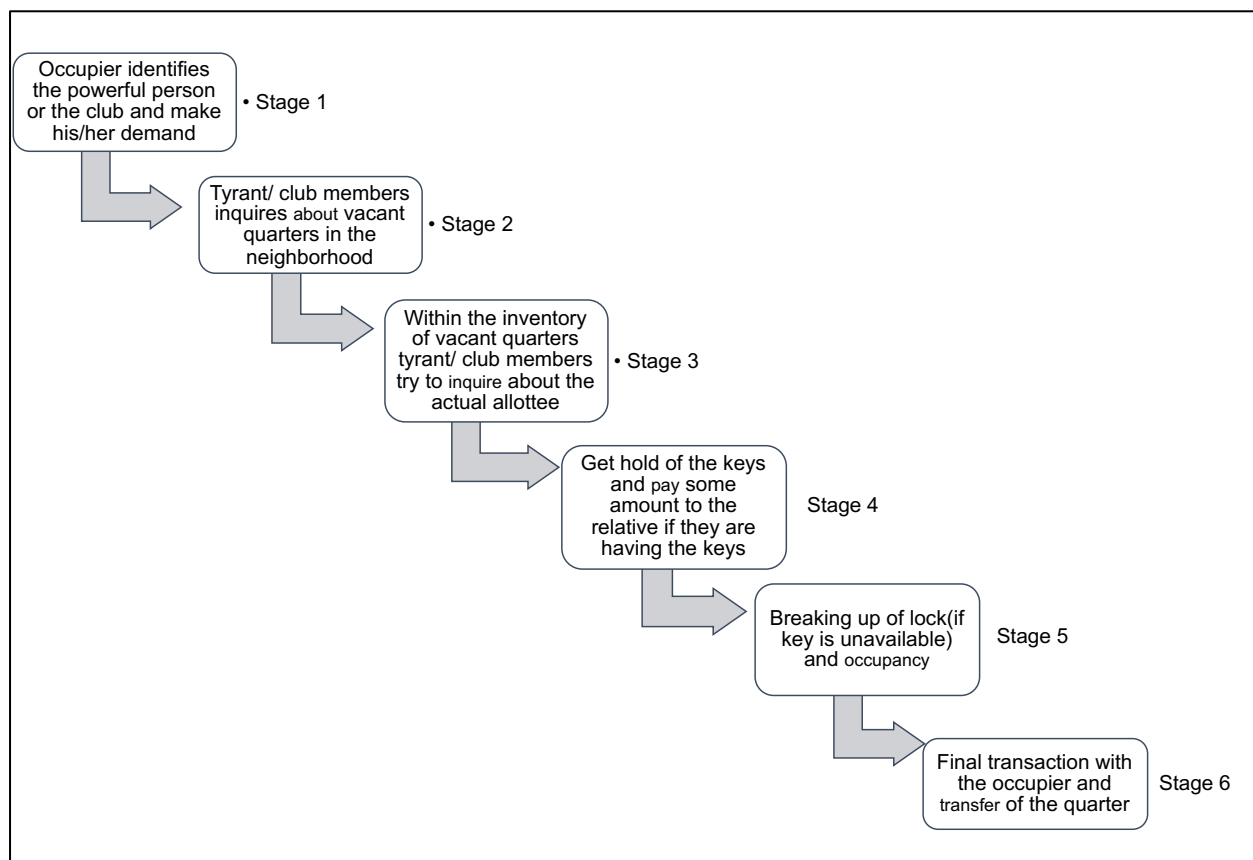


Figure 44 Stages of Occupancy of Worker's Quarter

Laksman says that the entire process from stage One to Six is very rapid; it usually takes a week at most. This adhocism creates a hegemonic socio-spatial relation in the neighbourhood by encouraging the local tyrants/ club members to involve themselves in the occupancy process. This adhocism also enables exclusion from within as the occupier of the quarter without being the beneficiary gets access to the worker's quarter. Laksman and other workers in the interview also mention this same network is often used to intimidate the workers during any movement. This construction of 'hegemonic locals' (discussed in the previous chapter) shapes the relationship between different actors involved in conflict politics. This also demonstrates the interconnectedness of the neighbourhood and mill politics where power gets utilised, mobilised or used as coercive means through the same actors. This nature of spatial adhocism helps us to analyse how people manoeuvre across different networks of power. Here, the postcolonial state being illegible operates through local clubs and tyrants and people at the margins creates a transactional relationship with the state apparatus.

Example 4- Encroachment: Squatter dwellers in Salt Lake express in the interview that they usually consider having a second option of space if there is an eviction. In my interview, Bimal and Rajesh disclose their second option: a litigated land parcel which they have purchased. Kamala on the other hand occupied a property which was provided as a rehabilitation settlement in Nonadanga.

The following table shows the type of second property, the mechanism for acquiring it and current status for cases of Bimal, Rajesh and Kamala. These three cases do not show any exceptions; rather, these cases are representative examples of how occupancy operates in the life of squatter dwellers.

Table 12 Propertied Citizenship through Occupancy

Respondent	Type of second property	Purpose	Mechanisms to acquire	Current Status
Bimal	A small plot in an already	To achieve propertied citizenship	Parts of acquired govt. land was vacant after ↓	Constructed a structure with the help of

	occupied govt. land	and speculative urbanism	<p>completion of an infrastructural project</p> <p>Local residents occupied those lands</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Information in Salt Lake area was circulated through fish sellers</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Rajesh acquired the information from the fish sellers and contacted those occupiers</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Purchased the plot with INR 15,000 (equivalent to £170)</p>	bamboo to showcase his ownership. No one lives there
Rajesh	A small plot in an already occupied govt. land	To achieve propertied citizenship and speculative urbanism	<p>Plot was occupied by the local club with the sponsorship of the then ruling party CPIM</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Purchased from the local club</p>	Currently occupied by the neighbourhood club after T.M.C. came in power in 2011
Kamala	1 room flat	To achieve propertied citizenship	Rehabilitation colonies were established after Tolly Nullah eviction in 2002 for metro rail project	She spends every night there from 2011

			<p>↓</p> <p>Some acquaintance of her who already occupying one of the flats informed her</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Initially she kept some of her utensils to showcase her ownership</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Gradually she started staying there</p> <p>↓</p> <p>She was thrown out of the property couple of times without any proof of her ownership</p> <p>↓</p> <p>She occupied it after every time</p>	
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These three stories tell us how people at the margins use their social capital to occupy another property with the hope of having greater security and legitimacy to stay in the city. Here mobilisations happen through their informal networks developed through social capital. The circulation of spatial knowledge takes place sometimes through the fish sellers, sometimes other occupiers or sometimes through neighbourhood clubs. These life histories also indicate the tendency of 'propertied citizenship' where the acquisition of more property gives a sense of security in the precarious situation. This pattern indicates how urban aspirations are constructed through the imagery of properties and in all my cases, these properties are acquired through adhoc means of occupancy. Here adhocism serves two purposes. Firstly, it helps political society to navigate across different power networks which are formed by their urgency and finally helps spatial reappropriation. By doing so, it allows the people at the margins to exert

their rights in cities. Secondly, it allows the people at the margins to counter the rationale of eviction and their dispossession through the similar logic of 'propertied citizenship'. Here people at the margins become active participants of spatial production with direct engagement with space through everyday spatial practices (Martin, 2016).

Example 5- Post-Eviction Occupancy: It has been already discussed in the previous chapter how Ram has negotiated his rehabilitation after being evicted. Ram's story allows us to understand the postcolonial state's involvement in adhoc practices through 'quiet spaces of encroachment'. Ram's earlier home was demolished in the name of the world cup (Fig 45, right). The settlement Ram was living was also inhabited by daily labourers who used to work with a contractor for the municipal corporation.



Figure 45 Similar Settlement Like Ram's After Eviction in Ram's Settlement

After eviction from the *Bidhannagar* Municipal Corporation, the contractor occupied other public land and constructed some makeshift settlements. The contractor provided this adhoc arrangement because otherwise, he would lose his supply of daily labourers. Along with the daily labourers Ram was also allotted in the newly built adhoc houses as a co-resident of the earlier settlement (Fig. 46).



Figure 46 Ram's New House from Inside



Ram's New Settlement

My conversation with Bimal reflects how occupancy is sponsored by the state apparatus to get supply of unskilled workforce. When asked about this process, he responds:

"Now probably there is a labour contractor. Earlier, for any road construction works, they used to bring labourers from outside. Now, they are observing it costs them more. So, now they are capturing the government land and putting people there. I know one of them, not saying his name. He has 22 labourers who do road construction. It is not possible for him to bring these labourers from Malda or Murshidabad. What they do, there are many vacant plots in Salt Lake, so they keep people there and make them do their work. This is how the occupancy happened."

This selective allowance for the reappropriation of space happens because of two reasons. Firstly, as the municipality contractor is part of the power network of the municipal corporation, the occupancy is allowed. Secondly, the rehabilitated dwellers act as a pool of casual labour force for the construction work owned by the municipality contractor. This shows an example of patronage but not for the exchange of votes (as most of their voting rights are not within this electoral constituency). The other evicted squatter dwellers were not allocated any adhoc homes. This is because of their inability to access the power network which can make adhoc arrangements for them. Hence there is a selective legitimacy of the squatters.

My conversation with Ram shows how this selective legitimacy works.

Me: Do you think because of your connection with the municipality contractor, you got rehabilitated?

Ram: Yes. Pal is a contractor in the municipality. The entire sector 5 is in his control. He does contracting works for road works and all other works.

Me: So, if you guys were completely evicted, he wouldn't have any labourers. Probably that's why he managed to get a place for you.

Ram: See, in our slum, there were many labourers. Not all of them used to work under him. Once upon a time, I used to drive his government vehicle. I was his driver for two-four years. He is a good man. He has supported our cause. That's only I can say. If today, we didn't get this what we could do? Maybe we also need to shift somewhere like Bimal. We can't pressurise the government. Police have also told us that have we asked you to build houses, why are you staying here? I said we are Nine people. Initially, they were giving us one house. I told them it's not adequate. They said we didn't ask you to stay here. So, we are not bothered how nine people can manage here. Then after requesting them, they allotted another house. My mother and others were outside for two days. Nine people can't stay in one room. They stayed there for two days putting plastic sheets and then we were allotted another room.

When I asked how he feels about other people who were evicted but didn't get any rehabilitation, he expresses his compassion for them.

Me: One thing is not yet clear to me. They have evicted people from other places also. But why those people are not rehabilitated. Only you guys were rehabilitated. Why so? Everyone has the same right.

Ram: Absolutely. What you are saying is 100% right. We also feel the same. We want to say that, and we are saying that too. We are poor and there are a couple of more people who are also poor. They should also get this. We want to say this. Why the government will not provide them. It's not like that we are happy. We are also not happy about this. We also feel they should get. They have families too.

Ram's new allotment was done after submitting his Aadhaar card to the municipality contractor. Although the Aadhaar card doesn't have the actual address of Ram's previous home, still this document makes him eligible for urban citizenship (allotment of an adhoc home). Citing Bennett and Lyon (2008) Sriraman (2018) explains this technological regime of identification creates a "complex and latent system of identification" and produces new anxieties of recognition. Being a biometric ID developed through cloud-based technology (ibid. 137) Aadhaar embodies the assemblage of body, space, technology and identity. Despite being a biometric ID Ram manages to provide his 'narrated address' instead of an 'actual address' and

makes his Aadhaar card. Srivastava (2012) observes a similar situation of obtaining ID in Delhi slums. He says “Everyone needs proof. But even the most routine acts of obtaining identity proofs can go wrong” (Srivastava, 2012: 84). Ram and other squatter dwellers state that Bangladeshi migrants can’t have Aadhaar cards. However, this is a perceived sense of security for Ram and others (predominantly the Hindu residents of the squatter). As narrated address can be used for making Aadhaar card, it would be possible for Bangladeshi migrants (who are predominantly Muslims) to follow the same strategy to make Aadhaar card. My fieldwork in other squatter settlements of Salt Lake reveals that even ‘Bangladeshi migrants’ manage to get Aadhaar cards. However, in my conversation, no one identifies themselves as Bangladeshis, but some of the co-residents vaguely indicate them as ‘Bangladeshi migrants’. So, having an Aadhaar card partially legitimises their presence in the city even if they are settling in an ‘illegitimised’ colony or an ‘illegal’ migrant. Here Aadhaar also provides Ram and other Hindu residents with a perceived sense of security and creates a sense of otherness to the ‘Bangladeshi migrant’. Ram states those who could not furnish their Aadhaar card after eviction didn’t get these ‘tin-roofed’ houses. Ram is also well aware of his precariousness as these houses are only provided for three years. When I asked about his plans after three years, he reiterates the precariousness of his condition.

Me: Do you have any plans to meet municipality officials when this three years’ time would come to an end? Maybe to discuss whether this can be extended for three or two more years.

Ram: We haven’t decided that yet. We have our contractor on top of us. If there is any news, they only could get it, not us. We would only receive the news after they get it.

For Ram, sites of eviction and rehabilitation both become what Sanyal (2018) calls ‘zones of waiting’. She sees these zones as the intersection of precariousness and possibilities. She states “On the one hand, this increases their vulnerability and, in many cases, destitution. On the other hand, they find ways to make-do and hope for alternate futures. Waiting thus becomes an active process, shaping subjectivities, lived experiences and futures” (Sanyal, 2018:73). For Ram like many others waiting becomes a spatial subjectivity of precariousness, hope and violence. Waiting also enables Ram to express his desire for the qualification of urban citizenship, to have access to urban resources, to exert his rights in the cities. Simultaneously, this waiting

also symbolises his continuous disenfranchisement from the process of exerting his rights over urban space.

Here adhocism by the state through its apparatus of municipality contractor enables it to maintain a transactional relationship with the people at the margins of the state. This transactional relationship serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows the state to allow selective allowance of rights for the people at the margins and using them for vote bank politics. Secondly, it also allows the state to create a mechanism of discipline and dominance to the people and subsequently allows the inflow of capital for spatial appropriation. However, here, adhocism also allows them to deploy the contingent process of violence without being fully registered and minimises the likelihood for conflict politics.

Example 6- Subtle Conversion of Land: In the case of *Bhangar*, adhocism operates in a different way. Here the land brokers practice adhoc mechanism for land-use change to avoid conflict politics. The left image (fig. 47) below shows the land which was acquired for the construction of the power grid whereas the right image shows where the land transaction happened for a proposed SEZ. Both lands are agricultural land, but the land conversion for power grid agitated people and led to resistance, whereas the right one didn't. The SEZ land has changed its ownership, but the owners still have farming rights in those lands which showcases conversion without being registered.



Figure 47 Land Conversion at Waiting

Regarding this particular land (Fig. 47), my conversation with Sufi explains the nature of conversion where conversion is at waiting.

Me: So, what Gitanjali (the real estate company) used to do with those lands?

Sufi: They haven't developed those lands yet. They just purchased those lands and made a boundary around their lands.

Me: So, they constructed boundary walls!

Sufi: Not even walls. They used to put four sticks in four corners to show that the land is already being purchased. They have also said that till the time they are not developing these lands; we are allowed to do our farming. Everyone used to do farming in those lands whatever they owned before selling.

Me: Then what was the benefit for the company by purchasing these lands?

Sufi: Company will develop these lands in future and will earn their profit from that.

Me: But you all were allowed to do farming!

Sufi: Yes. We gave some amount of money to the company to do farming.

This adhocism may have two purposes. Firstly, the real estate company expects price appreciation over time and plans to develop the land after price appreciation to get higher profit margins. Secondly, by allowing partial farming rights to the landowners, the real estate company also ensures a slow land-use conversion process and hence avoids any conflict politics regarding land-use conversion. Here this adhocism serves the purpose of speculative urbanism without being fully registered and maintains a transactional relationship with the people at the margins instead of complete dispossession.

The cases of mutability show how spatial appropriation takes place in each case study. The first three examples are in case study 1, Example 4 and 5 in case study 2 and Example 6 is in case study 3. Mutability gets operationalised by the state (Example 1 and 2); by the political society (Example 4) and at the intersection mutually by the state and political society (Example 3 and 6).

6.4.3 Indeterminacy

The third form of spatial adhocism is indeterminacy. Indeterminacy, as a form of spatial adhocism, is enacted by the postcolonial state through ambiguity. This ambiguity serves two purposes for the postcolonial state. Firstly, it allows the state or its apparatus to deploy discipline and dominance over the subaltern subjects through intimidation and making their situation precarious. By doing so, it also attempts to change socio-spatial relations. Secondly, it also enables them to accumulate postcolonial capital without being fully registered. In the case of Loomtex, the state deploys indeterminacy through ambiguous categorisation of workers, whereas in the case of Bhangar, it allows them to bypass the legalities associated with land acquisition and registration process.

Example 1- Ambiguous categorisation of workers: At the shop floor level, the management also maintains an ambiguous categorisation of workers. Workers stated that only 20% of the total workers are permanent. During my fieldwork, I also encountered many workers are still working in the mill on daily wages after their retirement. The management keeps these daily wage labourers without recruiting permanent workers to bypass all the worker's benefit. My conversation with workers shows this:

Sateesh: Nobody is permanent. Nobody is temporary. Everyone is just working. Anytime they can lay off people.

Me: So, everything is adhoc?

Sateesh and Rajiv: Yes.

Rajiv: In Hukumchand, they said C.W.G. is also not temporary. But here in this mill, first they need to make people permanent, then only they can categorise. They need to give benefits if they are making workers permanent.

Me: Now, in this adhoc situation, the company is not giving any benefits to anyone? Rajiv: Nothing.

Me: So, you all are working as contractual labourers in the mill after retirement?

Sateesh: Let me explain this to you. Those who are working as mill workers they get full payment of Rs. 500. Those who have already retired, they get Rs. 300.

This demonstrates that the management consciously adopted this categorisation as a profit maximisation technique. This adhocism serves two purposes. Firstly, it also allows management to maintain an exploitative relationship with the workers at the shop floor level. Secondly, this can be treated as a strategic choice for the management to accumulate more capital without being fully registered. Hence it also reduces the chances of conflict politics as instead of nothing the workers are getting something. Those who are dependent on this temporary daily wage labourer job for their livelihood, usually can't voice their demand for P.F. or gratuity being in the risk of losing their daily wage job. As a hidden mechanism, this adhocism also helps the management to violate the worker's benefit and enables profit maximisation.

Example 2- Bypassing land acquisition process: The entire land acquisition process in Bhangar for the construction of the power grid was done in a dubious way. The adhoc nature exists in determining the act under which acquisition was made possible. Firstly, interviews with the villagers suggested that the land in Bhangar was acquired as per the guidelines of the *Land Acquisition Act, 1894* instead of the new act *The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013*. The new act *The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013* was supposed to come into force from January 1, 2014. The villagers alleged that the state government implemented the acquisition process just a day before January 1, 2014. When asked about the reason for this, the villagers replied that this would allow the government to bypass the procedure of mandatory Social Impact Assessment mentioned in Chapter II of the new act (Govt. of India, 2013). A detailed comparison between two acts also suggests the same as there is an absence of any mandatory Social Impact Assessment in previous legislation of the *Land Acquisition Act, 1894*. Another reason mentioned for acquiring the land under the previous *Land Acquisition Act, 1894*, was to reduce the compensation amount. As per the new act, the government is bound to provide compensation based on the current market value and also compensation is also allocated for standing crops. A detailed description of the factors determining the compensation amount is missing in

the previous act *Land Acquisition Act, 1894*. A comparative analysis between two acts also shows that in the new act, there is a provision for safeguarding food security. Chapter 3, section 10 of the new act mentions the following:

“(1) Save as otherwise provided in subsection (2), no irrigated multi-cropped land shall be acquired under this Act.

(2) Such land may be acquired subject to the condition that it is being done under exceptional circumstances, as a demonstrable last resort, where the acquisition of the land referred to in sub- section (1) shall, in aggregate for all projects in a district or State, in no case exceed such limits as may be notified by the appropriate Government considering the relevant State specific factors and circumstances.

(3) Whenever multi-crop irrigated land is acquired under subsection (2), an equivalent area of culturable wasteland shall be developed for agricultural purposes or an amount equivalent to the value of the land acquired shall be deposited with the appropriate Government for investment in agriculture for enhancing food security.” (Govt. of India, 2013: 14).

This provision was missing in the previous act. As most of the currently acquired lands in Bhangar area falls under “irrigated multi-cropped land”, it would have been impossible to acquire this land under the new act.

Secondly, procedural irregularities are evident in how the land was acquired under the previous act. For instance, the *Land Acquisition Act, 1894* requires an official declaration of the acquisition process and hearing of objections. These two were interestingly missing in the case of Bhangar. The announcement of the acquisition process should include clearly stated purpose of the land acquisition. My conversation with *Jomi Jibika Bastutantra O Poribesh Rakkha* Committee leader Mohammad reflects the ambiguity that was created for the purpose of acquisition and mode of communication for the declaration. Mohammad says the villagers came to know about the purpose of land acquisition through rumours. There was a complete absence of any formal communication process by the rural local body about the purpose of land acquisition.

Me: Has anyone formally informed you all?

Mohammad: First, they said, there will be a power plant here and connections will be given to other places. Then we thought if there are wires, our land would be valueless.

Me: How did they circulate the news? Did they give any pamphlets?

Mohammad: They just circulated and then put that board of power grid. You can see the board there.

Formal public consultation in a Gram Sabha, which is required for land acquisition was also not followed in this case. The state used this ambiguity to help them to acquire the land without much conflict.

Thirdly, major actors involved in the acquisition process include local tyrant (who happen to also be the head of the tier 2 level of the local panchayat).and his party workers from T.M.C.. The acquisition act mentions the involvement of the collector or the administrative wing in the process of acquisition. However, the state primarily involved their political actors for this, which is also evident from the previously mentioned conversation with Mohammad. Allegedly, the officials from the power grid corporation also negotiated primarily with the local tyrant. This was done purposefully for two reasons. On the one hand, the state was confident that their political dominance in the area would help them to bypass the regulations and make the acquisition process easier¹⁶. On the other hand, it would also indirectly support the burgeoning ‘syndicate raj’¹⁷ in the area and enable the local tyrant to siphon some money in the land dealing process.

Example 3- Land registration and distribution process: Adhocism at the margins in Bhangar are predominantly related to land registration and distribution process. As this area has observed increased demand for land in the recent past, many farmers follow adhoc mechanisms in the process of registration and distribution of inherited lands. This helps them to increase their share of landholding and hence to attempt to maximise profit through the conversion of those lands. Often the women are excluded

¹⁶ In 2016 Assembly Election the ruling party’s MLA secured 49.56% of total votes polled; In 2018 Panchayat Poll ruling party bagged 30 out of 31 Panchayat Samitis of Bhangar II constituency.

¹⁷ It is the extortion racket that is literally running the real estate business in West Bengal.

in the land distribution process after they get married and migrate to other locations. As per the Sharia law of inheritance and land distribution, a son's share is double that of a daughter. On top of that, if the daughter migrates to any other locations, the brothers usually try to exclude her entirely from the inheritance. To do so, they adopt adhoc means. This mechanism can be understood from the interview excerpt with the land broker turned protester Sheikh.

Sheikh: If sisters are married elsewhere, it also happened that without informing them 4 brothers have sold the land. The person who has come to purchase the land trusted the brothers and purchased the land. But after that, the sisters when the sisters got the information, they tried to check the land details with the Panchayat. Even it has found that the Panchayat issued certificates stating they don't have any sisters.

Me: But the Panchayat has only the mouza map for the land records.

Sheikh: No, they have all the details. Panchayat can issue the certificates for the proof of family members. People can bribe the head and take some certificates in his name. Nobody checks the reality, whether they have sisters or not. Why they do that? Just for the sake of money.

When asked what benefit the Panchayat will get from it, Sheikh says that the Panchayat can make money on two occasions for the same piece of land. First, they take bribes to issue a false certificate to the brothers. The second time, if the sisters' question that, to change the false certificate again to the actual one, they take money from the sisters. When asked about how the institution is allowing this, Sheikh responds:

"For the land registration process, the sub-registrar doesn't look into all this. Why? Because he looks into only the land deeds. He doesn't want to take responsibility for that. He leaves this for court settlement. He just verifies the deeds and put a seal of registration. He is not bothered who is taking whose lands. He only looks at the paper and authorises it. The corruption is at happening at the lower level".

Although there is no direct relation between this adhocism with conflict politics, through this adhocism people at the margins attempt to alter the land distribution system in that area. This 'faulty' land distribution system also indirectly complicated the land acquisition process as it was difficult for the rural local body to identify actual owners of the inherited land parcels which also further complicated the awarding of the

compensation amount. Simultaneously, as the Panchayat is well aware of this adhoc mechanism of land registration and distribution system, they stalled the process as a counter mechanism to curtail the farmer's movement.

Though there are practices of indeterminacy in case 1(Example 1) and case 3 (Example 2 and 3), no case of indeterminacy is found in case study 2. This may happen because of two reasons. Firstly, in case study 2 state is more directly present in the hegemonic appropriation of power, which limits any kind of ambiguous subjectivity. Secondly, the power networks (ibid 5.5.3) in case study 2 is less complex with the involvement of lesser number of actors. This may also result in the absence of indeterminacy.

6.4.4 Emergence

The final typology of spatial adhocism is emergence. Here emergence represents forming new kinds of power networks and utilising them for creation of new socio-spatial relationships. In the case of Loomtex mill and Salt Lake, the people at the margins use emergence through quiet encroachment of the ordinary. The quiet encroachment happens through mobilising their social capital. In the case of Salt Lake, the strange case of clientelism also represents emergence at the intersections as the state apparatus one way evicts the people at the but also simultaneously it rehabilitates the some of the evicted ones in some other place.

Example 1- Quiet encroachment of the ordinary: In the case of Loomtex, spatial adhocism at the margins happens through quiet encroachment. Chandavarkar (1998) mentions Indian working-class formulation is dependent on the social relations in the workplace and social organisations in the neighbourhood. For him, neighbourhoods are the sites where differences and solidarities are manifested. Simultaneously a diverse set of power networks operates at the workplace which are strengthened by neighbourhood relations, hegemonies are reproduced, and 'networked mobilisation' happens



Figure 48 Quiet Encroachment at Loomtex Quarter

through similar actors in both the networks. In the case of Loomtex, spatial adhocism at the margins happens through 'quiet encroachment of space'.

This "refers to noncollective, but prolonged, direct action by individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of life (land for shelter, urban collective consumption, informal work, business opportunities, and public space) in a quiet and unassuming, yet illegal, fashion" (Bayat, 2004: 197). In the Loomtex neighbourhood of worker's quarter, people usually extend parts of their home when there is a need (fig.48). This process is an organic process. The allotted quarters for the workers are usually small in size, so, whenever their family size increases, they extend part of the workers through occupying the land. My conversation with Laksman indicates this process of encroachment.

Me: If people want to expand their house, but having no connection with any goons, how they can do that? I think the land is not in anyone's name.

Laksman: If someone needs to be expanded, we consult that within the neighbourhood. Then they built something.

Me: How?

Laksman: That happens through the consultation with the neighbours. They think if we are supporting them, they will receive support when they need it.

Me: If someone is not having good relations with the neighbour, then?

Laksman: Then they would go to the main person in this area.

Me: Who is that person?

Laksman: Whomsoever it may.

Me: Like.

Laksman: Every neighbourhood has someone. Those who have more power, everyone listens to him. Sometimes they ask for some donations. Nobody says anything.

Here, encroachment happens through two kinds of mobilisations. Firstly, the mobilisation happens through using social capital, which is evident in Laksman's statement. Here, people usually encroach the adjacent space to their house after

consultation with the neighbours. If that fails, they try to mobilise through the power networks of that neighbourhood which usually include the local tyrants and neighbourhood clubs. Neighbourhood clubs have always been sites for politics of patronage in Kolkata (Roy, 2003a). They often act as a facilitator for providing services, housing, and even negotiating in family disputes. The ruling party tries to mobilise people for rallies through these clubs as these clubs receive direct support from the local MLAs. These clubs are also essential for the ruling party as they help to manage polling booths during election times. Hence, neighbourhood level micropolitics is centred around these clubs. These became more visible when T.M.C. came into power. The chief minister announced financial support to neighbourhood clubs for 'improving sports facilities'. It is not sure how much sports facilities have been 'improved' through these clubs, but they have become an essential apparatus for the ruling party. One newspaper report suggests that the state government has donated INR 600 crores (equivalent to almost £70 million) since 2011 to these clubs (Hindustan Times, 2018). Clubs being an essential agency in neighbourhood politics helps people for if there is any dispute in the 'quiet encroachment' process. The neighbourhood clubs also sometimes receive financial supports from the mill management and when required help the management to intimidate workers. This shows how mill politics and neighbourhood politics are entangled.

A very similar kind of encroachment mechanism happens in Salt Lake too. It has already been discussed in the previous chapter that how similar organic process of encroachment operates among squatter dwellers of Salt Lake. The respondents say that the encroachment enables them to claim rights in cities and also this expansion process gives them a



Figure 49 Quiet Encroachment in Salt Lake

sense of security by claiming more land in their continuous precariousness. Here, encroachment happens only through the network of social networks and mobilisation of social capital. As everyone, at some point of time, needs to extend their homes, it is usually a mutually agreed practice in Salt Lake.

Example 2- Clientelism: In the case of Salt Lake, the respondents highlight how after each eviction, someone from the ruling party always showed them new locations for occupancy. My conversation with Kamala highlights this too.

***Me:** After the demolition, did they also inform you that there would not be any evictions in near the future?*

***Kamala:** Yes. They used to tell us.*

***Me:** Do think that the grassroots leaders of CPM were also involved in this?*

***Kamala:** Yes.*

***Me:** The police used to get the money from you. Do you think CPM leaders also got a share of that money?*

***Kamala:** Yes. Whomsoever in power, they would do the same. When CPM was in power, the police were with them. Now it's T.M.C.'s time, so they are with them.*

***Me:** Do you think the police used to evict you from the instructions of the party? Was there anyone from CPM who used to come and tell you?*

***Kamala:** Yes. They used to tell us that build your house. You guys are poor people. Where would you go? We did rally many times in support.*

My interviewee, Rajesh also stated that either the police or local political people not only showed the new locations for occupancy but would also sometimes come and tell the people about impending demolition and eviction so that they can save their household belongings. The police appear to help the residents both during the eviction, and during the rehabilitation to ensure eviction with the minimum damage and violence. Analytically, this portrays a strange relationship between the state and the political society. The same state which deploys violence also ensures that the personal costs are not too high. This adhocism creates a transactional relationship between the postcolonial state and the people at the margins, which also sometimes capitalised for the political survival of the postcolonial state. Through its ambiguous deployment of eviction drive, the postcolonial state manages to create elusive imagery of violence simultaneously positions them as oppressors and saviours.

Emergence in case study 1 and 2 indicates how various socio-spatial relationships are formulated by the state and by political society. Emergence is also present in the post-eviction resettlement in the Salt Lake case (ibid 5.3.3).

Table 13 Typologies of Adhocism

Typologies of adhocism	Case	Practices	Agency
Urgency	Loomtex Mill	Gate Bahar	<div> <div>State</div> <div>Political Society</div> </div>
		Sudden mill closure	
	Bhangar	Sudden stalling of land registration and mutation process	
		Violation of power grid corporation manual	
		Secret weapon	
Mutability	Loomtex Mill	Occupancy of mill	State
		Subtle conversion of land for commercial use	
		Occupancy of quarters	
	Salt Lake Squatter	Post eviction occupancy	Intersections
		Occupancy of land/property	Political Society

	Bhangar	Subtle conversion of land use]. Intersections
Indeterminacy	Loomtex Mill	Ambiguous categorisation of workers] State
	Bhangar	Bypassing land acquisition process	
		Land registration and distribution process	
Emergence	Loomtex Mill and Salt Lake Squatter	Quiet encroachment of the ordinary] Political Society
	Salt Lake Squatter	Clientelism] Intersections

The above discussion on spatial adhocism and various examples of it indicates three unique characteristics of spatial adhocism. Firstly, it acts what Levi-Strauss (1962) has called 'bricoleur' (bricolage). For Levi-Strauss, 'bricoleur' is the performance of diverse activities in a non- hegemonic structure. For all three cases (from below and top), adhocism arises from urgency and reappropriation. The element of urgency is not an impromptu, ambiguous solution rather a strategic mechanism operationalised through everyday repetitive and habitual practices of different actors and networks of power. The reappropriation of space happens through negotiations, violence, compromises where it becomes 'sphere of multiplicity' and relational (Massey, 2005).

Secondly, the examples of the spatial adhocism show that the assemblage is always purposeful and "deliberate realisation of a distinctive plan"(Buchanan, 2015). Various authors citing Deleuze and Guttari (1988) establish that assemblage is a new becoming, a constellation of materials and actions and form of heterogeneous relations (Bennett, 2004; Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). Here, spatial adhocism

becomes a discursive politics enacted through assemblage. “It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’. It is never filiations which are important but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind” (Deleuze and Guattari (1987):69 cited in Müller, 2015: 28). Here, the assemblage is relational and generative. It is relational for two reasons. Firstly, there is a certain autonomy that exists with each of the elements. Secondly, adhocism allows continuous flows of objects, actions and power (Müller, 2015). It is generative because it always seeks territorialisation and deterritorialization which is very visible in the empirics of how adhocism operates through the state, through people at the margins and at the intersections (Legg, 2009).

Finally, the typologies show spatial adhocism is omnipresent in a postcolonial city like Kolkata. It also shows adhoc practices are not only restricted to the political society; but rather, the state also adopts adhoc practices. Hence, here, spatial adhocism becomes that methodological apparatus through which postcolonial urbanism can be theorised. Here, I use the Agambenian notion of apparatus or ‘*dispositif*’ which serves a dominant strategic function at a given historical time (Agamben, 2009). For him, “The term apparatus designates that in which, and through which, one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subjects” (Agamben, 2009: 11). To theorise the urban through spatial adhocism I use three tactics of comparative urbanism (Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Robinson, 2016a, 2016b). These tactics involve tracing, composing and launching. The next section first provides a summary of arguments and discusses how to include incompleteness as a theoretical category. Finally, it details out how these tactics are used for the purpose of theorisation.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides empirical evidence for research question c (ibid 1.3) from three case studies. It also shows how spatial adhocism is omnipresent in postcolonial urban practices with its multiple socio-spatial subjectivities. These multiple socio-spatial

subjectivities are constructed through assemblages of heterogeneous elements. This heterogeneity comes with various practices, purposes, spatial manifestation and actors. By doing so, it creates an alternative framework through which postcolonial urbanism can be theorised. This framework is developed through the four typologies of spatial adhocism. These typologies demonstrate socio-spatial subjectivities in the postcolonial city like Kolkata are dynamic and relational. Hence, instead of a fixity of categories, it encourages an iterative process for theory formulation. The typologies also signify these categories are always incomplete. They are incomplete because of their untranslatability, dynamicity and urgency. Chapter 5 traces the heterogeneous relationship of state- political society relationships through documenting conflict politics comparatively across three case studies. Then, in this chapter with the help of empirics of spatial adhocism it composes the interconnected trajectories of urban outcomes. Finally, this chapter launches a comparative framework to theorise postcolonial urbanism by introducing 'incompleteness' as a theoretical category. By doing so, this chapter answers the research question d.

The examples of spatial adhocism show four unique characteristics of it: urgency, mutability, indeterminacy and emergence. Spatial adhocism is emergent because of its 'creative unpredictability'. As the examples of emergence shows how new socio-spatial relations are formed through clientelism in the case of Salt Lake. Similar kinds of its 'creative unpredictability' can be seen in the case of Bhangar where land-use change did not initiate any resistance. It is also multiple because of constellations of material, objects, actions and forms. In case Loomtex mill the occupancy of worker's indicates multiplicity of relations which intermingled with various power networks. The workers co-opt with the same 'hegemonic locals' who have participated in shop-floor violence. Finally, it is indeterminate because several actors engage uneven topographies of power, which sometimes counters each other, sometimes transact with each other or sometimes assimilate with each other. This can be seen in the ambiguous categorisation of workers at the mill and in the contingent process of land use change within the mill area. At this juncture, I construct spatial adhocism as forms of social formations through assemblage. It has two distinctive elements. Firstly, it adopts translocality through which it aggregates different relations among different actors at different sites (Davies, 2012). Secondly, the component of becoming an

apparatus. Here, the apparatus gives stability to the assemblage and it exists within its precariousness and 'permanent temporariness'.

Conceptually, spatial adhocism proposes two formations. Firstly, it attempts to destabilise the formation of law as normative apparatus. Here, the law acts as a constitutive power which forms new social relations. As Das (2011) states "Law in this scenario is seen as a residual category whose role is episodic, artificial, and often disruptive" (Das, 2011: 320). On one hand, the squatter dwellers acquire addresses for Aadhaar card in a 'non-legal' way and simultaneously they get evicted for 'illegal' occupation of lands. Secondly, it also challenges the idea of 'malpractice by the postcolonial state'. Here, spatial adhocism unsettles the idea of 'malpractice' and makes that a constitutive category of the postcolonial state. Here, 'malpractice' cannot be read as a failure of the institutions; rather it establishes 'malpractice' as a self-defence mechanism for the postcolonial state for their political survival. For the state, this self-defence mechanism enables them to overlook the legal status of the mill and also helps them to sponsor rehabilitation of the evicted dwellers in another occupied land.

Through its continuous circulations across social space, spatial adhocism helps us to analyse what Gaonkar and Povinelli (2003) call an 'ethnography of forms'. For them, "This ethnography of forms, for want of a better term, can be carried out only within a set of circulatory fields populated by myriad forms, sometimes hierarchically arranged and laminated but mostly undulating as an ensemble, as a melange, going about their daily reproductive labor of mediating psychosocial praxis" (Gaonkar and Povinelli, 2003: 391-392). Spatial adhocism continuously construct categories and simultaneously defamiliarises itself from those categories. This can be understood with the deployment of different mechanisms at different agency levels, but also at the intersections, it attempts to merge those categories and formulates a fluid socio-spatial subjectivity. Hence, spatial adhocism creates social imagery being in a fluid middle ground. This fluid middle ground emerges within a set of "embodied practices" and "explicit doctrines" (Gaonkar, 2002).

Finally, it is already discussed in the earlier section that focusing on these interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism, the research establishes spatial adhocism as a methodological apparatus to theorise postcolonial urbanism. Spatial adhocism as a framework is constructed as an oeuvre of urban practices. By practice here, I mean, “more expansive sense of different ways of moving by differently situated and motivated actors and institutions (Bhan, 2019:640). Practices documented in urgency, mutability, indeterminacy and emergence highlight this notion. These practices also show an assemblage of material, power, actors.



Figure 50 Priya Ravish Mehra, Cotton Fabric fragment with Daphne pulp, 14x21 inches 2016

Source: <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/priya-ravish-mehra-rafoogari/>

Here, I use the analogy of ‘Rafoo’ by Priya Ravish Mehra. ‘Rafoo’ is a traditional art to repair damages in textile. The art of ‘Rafoo’ involves making damage invisible. Simultaneously, spatial adhocism operates in a contingent way and makes urban outcomes visible. The visibility involves socio-spatial relations, spatial reappropriation, survival strategies. Bhan (2019b) in his plenary lecture of “At the frontiers of the urban: thinking concepts and practices globally” asks to consider repair as a theoretical category. In support of this he argues repair is assemblage and lack of any presuppositions. He also states repair is about endurance and proximate knowledge (Bhan, 2019b). Similarly, spatial adhocism as framework encourages to build on the incompleteness of urban practices and outcomes. It is incomplete because “all of the evidence is not yet in and often hard to come by” (Simone and Pieterse, 2017:X). As a framework to theorise postcolonial urbanism spatial adhocism proposes the following:

- Focus on practices based on urgency, mutability, indeterminacy and emergence
- Categories are dynamic and iterative

- Treat incompleteness as a theoretical category
- Analytical tools involve comparative analysis of forms of capital, power networks and relationships between the set of actors
- Urban outcomes are context-specific

Spatial adhocism proposes three tactics. These tactics involve tracing, composing and launching. Through tracing, the research compares differential patterns of conflict politics and heterogeneity of relationships between the postcolonial state and the political society. Through tracing it is possible to analyse how power is mobilised through various networks. Whereas, composing helps to understand the interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism and constructs it as social imagery of urban outcome. Composing helps to compare different outcomes from each of the case study and finally constructs typologies of spatial adhocism. Finally, by launching its two formulations (ibid. 236), the research theorises urban in a nuanced way from a comparative perspective.

7 Conclusion

“When we seem to have won or lost in terms of certainties, we must, as literature teachers in the classroom, remember such warnings -- let literature teach us that there are no certainties, that the process is open, and that it may be altogether salutary that it is so.”

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Death of a Discipline

7.1 Introduction

This thesis aimed to explore why one slum gets cleared while others do not. By building on this question, the thesis further elaborated its scope beyond slums and explored various forms of urban politics and its spatial manifestations in Kolkata. The thesis analysed and compared three forms of urban politics- labour politics, eviction politics and agrarian land politics. The aim of this chapter is to represent the arguments from each chapter in a concise form and to finally establish how this thesis has adopted certain strategies for decentring the production of urban knowledge. To do so, this chapter first summarises discussions from chapter 2 and defines what framework of postcolony is used for this research. Secondly, the chapter revisits previously described research questions (chapter 1) and explains how the empirical analysis of previous chapters (chapter 5 and 6) answers these research questions. This chapter also develops a comparative framework of spatial adhocism in the context of postcolonial urbanism. As a comparative framework, it limits the scope of the universalising process of theorisation and signposts certain necessary conditions to analyse and theorise postcolonial urbanism from elsewhere. Finally, the chapter in its epilogue maps approaches that have been followed throughout the research for the decentring knowledge production and also discusses the contribution that this research makes in the dynamic field of urban theorisation. The next section revisits the critical review of literature related to postcolonial capital, state and the urban.

7.2 Revisiting Postcolony

It is already discussed in chapter 2 that this research uses tropes of heterogeneity, indeterminacy, constituency and relationality to understand and analyse postcolonial conditions. Based on these tropes, the research constructs postcolony beyond any particular geography. Here, the postcolony is based on certain conditions which questions and unsettles modernity which is predominantly European in nature. In Chakrabarty's (1997) term postcolony is a history that can be understood by the 'politics of despair' where the history itself makes it visible within the same structure which obscured it (Chakrabarty, 1997). He further notes "Histories that aim to displace a hyperreal Europe from the centre toward which all historical imagination currently gravitates will have to seek out relentlessly this connection between violence and

idealism that lies at the heart of process by which narratives of citizenship and modernity come to find a natural home in “history” (Chakrabarty, 1997:289). This also portrays how constituency is an important part of postcolony. As Mbembe (2001) notes, postcolonial conditions can be best understood by the nature of conviviality, not by resistance and collaborations. This conviviality helps to unsettle the boundary between the dominant and dominated and at the end able to “each has robbed the other of vitality” (Mbembe, 2001: 104). At this juncture, the research opposes the dominant binary vocabularies of north-south; dominant-dominated; colonisers-colonised; modern-nonmodern etc. It rather argues that the postcolony can be identified through a set of conditions and can possibly even exist beyond the geography of the global south. Several works (Mountz *et al.*, 2002; Griffiths, 2014; Brun, 2015; Sanyal, 2018) on asylum seekers and protected displacement show how uncertainty and adhoc arrangements are also omnipresent at the central of apparently ‘modern’ states. However, by putting this argument forward, this research is not attempting to claim a reductionist view that any kind of uncertainty can be read as a symptom of postcolony. It rather pushes the understanding of postcolony beyond any geographical fixity as this “fixity of its ‘post’ is that the post never fixed colonialism in the past” (Raghuram, Noxolo and Madge, 2014: 123).

As has already been discussed in chapter 2) conditions are starting points of critique. In the context of postcolonial conditions, the dislocation of fixity becomes one of the starting points. This dislocation serves three specific purposes. Firstly, this dislocation unsettles certain binary propositions and constructs postcolony as a relational subjectivity. This relational nature is documented through the various forms of relations that people at the urban margins maintain with the state and strategic selection of practices to involve the state. These relations sometimes include co-opting with the state but at other times it can be antagonistic, agonistic or can be subsumed by the hegemonic formation of the state. Secondly, this dislocation also enables us to speak for a “history of a vanishing present” (Spivak, 1999). Mbembe (2001) states colonisation as an enterprise is based on three factors- appropriation of the native by the colonisers; familiarisation of the native and the colonist and utilisation of the native by the colonists. As a method of dislocation, postcolony always attempts to reappropriate, recategorise and defamiliarise itself from its own constructed formations. As discussed in chapter 5 people at the margins as well as the postcolonial

state reappropriate socio-spatial relations and form new praxis, relations and categories. This reappropriation is constructed through an urgency. Here, urgency acts as a temporal method (Olson, 2015) and serves two purposes. First, for the people at the margins, it compels them to formulate an agency to act to exert their claims to secure their immediate future. For the postcolonial state, the urgency enables it to minimise the intensity of conflict politics and also helps the state to act in favour of capital accumulation in a contingent form. Secondly, this dislocation also allows a search for new methods of analysis which enables to capture the 'history of present' and provides a framework for the 'untranslatable'. Spivak (2015) says, "We must persistently educate ourselves into the peculiar mindset of accepting the untranslatable, even as we are programmed to transgress that mindset by 'translating' it into the mode of 'acceptance'" (Spivak, 2015:292). For the purpose of this thesis a framework for the 'untranslatable' allows us to include incompleteness as a theoretical category. It also enables us to understand and analyse certain urban practices for which vocabulary is yet to be developed. By doing so, it inducts spatial adhocism as a new vocabulary for urban theorisation.

This research captured these multiple dimensions of postcolonial conditions by using urban politics as a lens of analysis in the context of Kolkata. To do so, the broader aim of the research was to capture how urban politics shapes multiple socio-spatial subjectivities in the postcolonial city, Kolkata. To explore this aim, the research formulated four research questions. The research questions are the following:

- a. How do people at the urban margins engage in various forms of relationships with the postcolonial state?
- b. What kind of actors and power networks operationalise heterogeneous relations between the postcolonial state and people at the urban margins?
- c. What nature of adhocism exists in the postcolonial urbanism?
- d. How does comparative understanding of interconnected trajectories between cases offer a framework for theorising the postcolonial urbanism?

Relying on ethnography as a methodology, this research maps various forms of conflict politics across the three case studies. The research also compares adhoc practices that exist in these three case studies. The following sections explain how the analysis in chapters 5 and 6 addresses the research questions.

7.3 Heterogeneity in Conflict Politics

The multiple path dependency of postcolonial capital is also translated in the heterogeneity of socio-spatial subjectivities. Each of the case studies in this research demonstrates three different forms of postcolonial capital. Chapter 5 made political economic analysis of capital in each of the case studies and explained the genealogy of subsequent conflict politics against the circulation of capital and state practices. Following Papaioannou (2014), this chapter represents the dynamic trajectories of social change that political society practice.

In case study 1 Loomtex mill as a jute mill represents traditional industrial capital where abstract labour generates commodities and surplus value. Simultaneously, this industrial capital gets coupled with the neoliberal trajectory of deindustrialisation. Whereas in case study 2, it is evident how the environment is used as a trope for capitalist accumulation and subsequent displacement of people at the urban margins. Here, middle-class activism in the name of 'clean and green Salt Lake' and subsequent criminalisation of poor people shows how the logic of capital accumulation for an aspirational urban identity is promoted through the displacement of people. Case study 3 represents new routes for capital circulation where agricultural land, considered to be dead capital, is converted into high-value liquid capital of real estate developments or proposed Special Economic Zone (S.E.Z.) or power grid for electricity trading. Speculation defines the characteristics of this kind of capital accumulation. These cases show in the context of Kolkata how capital operates and circulates through various routes like liquid capital of the land. Each of these routes exhibits distinct characteristics in terms of accumulation mechanisms, dispossession strategies and operationalisation of the postcolonial state. The nature of 'friction' in each of these urban margins defines the heterogeneity of the relationship between the state and political society. In case study 1 the political society's involvements with the postcolonial state depend on various factors.

In the case of Loomtex mill, the postcolonial state maintains its ambiguous presence through its various apparatuses like the police, neighbourhood clubs and making secret alliances with the mill management. The practice of conflict politics by the political society at the initial stage directs towards the mill management, which

operates at the shop floor level. However, people at the margins are aware of the state and mill management nexus and gradually direct strategies to counter the postcolonial state, which involves rail/ road blockaded, closure of market etc. At the Loomtex mill capital's velocity is comparatively slow and capital's transformation is contingent. This shapes the form of conflict politics which often only focuses on dispossession through surplus value. Here, other forms of dispossessions like deindustrialisation and casualisation of the labour force are frequently overlooked. The postcolonial state through its silence also manages to portray a quasi-welfarist image for which the political society at the initial stage attempts to approach the state for crisis management. Sangrami Majdoor Union submitted deputations to the state departments; they even had multiple meetings with the labour commissioner. Maintaining an agonistic relation rather than antagonism with the state helps the political society for networked mobilisation of power and gives them better ability to navigate across the topology of power. When these means fail, people at the urban margins adopt direct antagonism as a strategy to press the state for their demands.

The state deploys means of violence and domination through local tyrants or by the police to minimise the impact of conflict politics. However, the Loomtex case also shows the binary framework of domination and resistance and dispossession mechanism by the entrepreneurial state is a reductionist framework to map the heterogeneity of relationship between the political society and the postcolonial state. This framework fails to explain why the local tyrants also selectively facilitate people at the margins to occupy vacant worker's quarters. The state promotes this for their political survival and also to acquire partial validation to maintain a pseudo-welfarist narrative. Simultaneously, whenever that image gets threatened, the state deploys violence as a means of control.

The Loomtex mill movement shows two things. Firstly, non-party autonomous trade union politics in the context of jute mills of Kolkata is more effective because of a variety of tactics they adopt to exert their demands. Traditional trade unions often submit to the desire of the management and act as an extended apparatus for domination and violence. Affiliations to different political parties also restrict their navigations across the topography of power. On the other hand, the autonomous Sangrami Majdoor Union is devoid of any moral obligations to fall into the party line

and manage to bargain better for the worker's demands. Secondly, the movement managed to mobilise many workers at the initial stage and got momentum with the events (murder of mill manager, the arrest of workers etc). However, over time, sporadic violence replaced organised violence and domination for which the movement also became slow. But this does not restrict people at the margins to practice conflict politics; rather, new forms of relationships were formed after this. These new kinds of relationships include Sangrami Majdoor Union's alliance with the members of less powerful trade unions, cooperation etc.

In the case of Salt Lake, the presence of state violence is very much visible with the eviction of squatter dwellers. The state directly promotes capital accumulation in the name of 'clean green city' and dispossessed people at the margins. Here, capital's mobility is based on the perceived image of aspirational identity of the world-class city for which the postcolonial state attempt to eliminate the hindrances (here squatter dwellers) in the circulatory route of the capital. However, the state is well aware of the political subjectivity of this elimination process (losing mass support) and limits the process of dispossession for only a specified period of time. This is identifiable when the eviction drive stopped after the completion of the world cup and squatters who were on the verge of evictions went back to the previous state of existence. The state also selectively rehabilitated some squatter dwellers through its apparatus, the municipal contractor. Through this paradoxical mechanism, the postcolonial state maintains its entrepreneurial image but sugar-coats it through partial rehabilitation. This indeterminacy of the state operation cannot be read as the weakness or immaturity of the state; rather, it highlights the calculative risk-taking ability of the postcolonial state. This is also reflected in the forms of relationship the political society maintains with the state. Here conflict politics operates through clientelism, bargaining and negotiations and 'quiet' encroachments. State's indirect promotion of the elite resistance shows how the state is willing to support capital accumulation.

As an outcome of the movement, Salt Lake shows how the political society counters the state during specific events of evictions. The political society otherwise maintains a co-opting relationship with the state and often gets dominated by the state apparatus. However, events of eviction motivate them to transform those relationships

and involve them in direct antagonism. This direct antagonism also reminds the state about its dependency on people at the margins for their political survival.

In case study 3 Bhangar being a peri-urban area represents a high-velocity circulation zone for capital. Numerous investments in the form of residential development, proposed SEZ, and conversion of agricultural land use for non-agricultural purposes highlights how capital is hypermobile in Bhangar. This hypermobility of capital is directly promoted by the state where local tyrants, affiliated with the ruling party get involved in the land transactions by unfair means. The state became more visible in the capital accumulation process when it proposed a power grid for electricity trading by the forceful acquisition of agricultural land. The state's direct involvement in the accumulation process propelled political society to practice counter mechanisms directly against the state. This also led to the creation of an autonomous state free zone in the villages. Simultaneously, the participation in the rural local body election by the political society is also an attempt to unsettle the hegemonic appropriation of power by the state. After maintaining an antagonistic relationship with the state for over two years, finally, when the state agreed to rehabilitate the dispossessed through compensations, implementing developmental programs, the political society engages in collective bargaining. This also shows the dynamism of the relationship that people at the margins maintain with the postcolonial state.

As discussed earlier, the Bhangar movement manages to create a discursive political field which was developed through essentialising common interests. Over time, the narrative of the movement was also changed to address several developmental agendas and an attempt to create radical democracy. Here radical democracy signifies achieving common goals through consensus building, a set of dynamic and an iterative processes that act as signifiers for postcolonial subjects (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001).

This discussion shows how each case study exhibits differential forms of capital accumulation and subsequent resistance to it. This also shows how political society maintains various forms of relationships with the state. These forms of relationships often enable them to exert their rights on cities; while the state also maintains certain relationships for its' political survival.

Table 14 Heterogeneity of Conflict Politics

Case Study	Type of Conflict Politics	Type of Relationship
Case Study 1 Loomtex Mill	Fetishization of law	Bargaining
	Ordinary Spaces of negotiations	Clientelistic, Collaboration
	Mobilisation and Outreach	Antagonism
	Direct Antagonism	Radical antagonism
Case Study 2 Salt Lake Squatter	Ordinary Spaces of negotiations	Bargaining, Collaboration
	Occupancy and Clientelism	Clientelism, Collaboration
	Quiet Spaces of Encroachment	Clientelism, Collaboration
	Mobilisation through Political Power	Agonistic
Case Study 3 Bhangar Power Grid	Politics of Autonomy	Radical antagonism
	Formal Transactional	Agonistic, Collaboration
	Participation in Electoral Politics	Antagonism

The above table (Table 14) maps various forms of conflict politics and heterogeneity of relationship that the political society maintains with the postcolonial state. In doing so, it also unsettles the binary conceptualisation of relations between the state and the society and finally offers a dynamic framework for understanding the complexities that exist in the postcolony. The analysis critiques Chatterjee's (2011) formulation of political society and offers an alternative framework by adding multiplicity of these relationships. The next section discusses how these relationships form a network of power for the mobilisation of resources.

7.4 Networked mobilisation of power

This thesis exemplifies, builds on and contributes to notions of 'networked mobilisation power'. Here, power is a fluid medium that can be understood through social interactions which stabilise networks of social relations (Allen, 2003, 2009). Allen (2009) argues that power is mobilised through networks of human interactions which subsequently mobilises resources. Chapter 5 maps the actors that are involved in this and the networks that are utilised for operationalisation of conflict politics for each of the case studies. Enactment of various forms of relationships is manifested through networked mobilisation of power.

In case study 1, the state is situated at the top of the power network and it uses political leaders, the police and mill owners as apparatuses for the exploitation of the people at the margins. Simultaneously it also uses local tyrants, trade unions and clubs for political mobilization. This allows the mill owners to deliberately utilize the administrative apparatus of the police force for domination and violence. In return, the mill owners pay 'hush money' to the police and local leaders. They also support the state for political mobilization. For rehabilitation, the state also regulates the local tyrants and clubs for the selective deployment of rights for the people at the margins through occupancy. Sangrami Majdoor Union engages in conflict politics through a complicated relationship with the state as well as the political leaders. This relationship is sometimes antagonistic, sometimes it involves negotiations; sometimes it is violent, and sometimes contingent. The Union also maintains a fuzzy relationship with the police. Sometimes they pressurise the police to fulfil their demands. Sometimes they also aim to legally fight against the management by involving the police in their conflict politics. Their strategic navigation within the power networks exhibits an innovative form of non-party trade union politics. The innovation lies in collective bargaining ability without acting as a power broker. They have always avoided a provocative politics of violence. Simultaneously they also utilise other non-violent forms of direct antagonisms. Although CPIML Red Star played an important role to form those autonomous non-party alliances, the operationalisation of politics happened through grassroots leaders who emerged during the process. The solidarity networks among different political groups pave the way for an alternative issue-based politics. People at the margins also utilise various power networks for 'quiet encroachment' or

occupancy of worker's quarters which is discussed in chapter 5. These kinds of mobilizations are sometimes hegemonic, where clubs and local tyrants are used for mill violence. But these clubs also enable people at the margins to 'occupy' quarters and claim their rights to housing and subsequently claim urban space.

In case study 2, the state is not illegible, rather it exists through the municipal corporation which orchestrated the eviction drive. In the second tier of the network, the state exists through its various apparatuses like councillor, the police and the municipal contractor. The resident's group of Salt Lake is an elite group situated in parallel to the state apparatus. It usually collaborates with the state apparatus for capital accumulation. However, they also do not get subsumed within the identity of the state, rather, they play the role of civil society. People at the margins lie at the bottom of the network but manage to navigate across the power hierarchy by involving different lobbies of the ruling party and their internal dynamics (discussed in chapter 5).

In case study 3, political society does not lie at the bottom of the network; rather, it counters the state from a similar position. The location of the political society higher in the network is possible through its continuous mobilisation of resources, creating a broader solidarity network as a pressure group and by inducting representatives in the rural local body. These enable them to bargain collectively and strategically. This has also helped them to create a state-free autonomous zone over a year.

These above examples show how postcolonial state and the political society form various networks of power. These networked mobilisations of power help in two things. Firstly, this helps political society to mobilise resources collectively and effectively for conflict politics. Following Allen (2009), this networked mobilisation of power also enables them to change socio-spatial relations. Secondly, these networks are used by the postcolonial state both to control and discipline political society and to simultaneously seek validation for its quasi-welfare approach towards the people at the margins. This validation helps them in vote bank politics and hence for their political survival. The spatial manifestations of these networks are visible in the practices of spatial adhocism. The next section discusses how adhocism is omnipresent in postcolonial urbanism.

7.5 Omnipresence of Spatial Adhocism

The postcolonial state and the people at the margins use adhocism for various purposes. Spatial adhocism helps the postcolonial state for the accumulation of capital without fully being registered. Simultaneously, people at the urban margins use spatial adhocism to exert their rights on cities, to claim their citizenship, sometimes even to engage with the state through conflict politics. Interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism are urgency, mutability, indeterminacy and emergence.

Here urgency means the instantaneous ability to transform or mobilise resources and utilisation of power networks in a given situation. This sometimes allows the postcolonial state or its apparatus to minimise conflict politics or at least to reduce the impact of conflict politics. This form of spatial adhocism is visible in the case of Loomtex mill where the mill management operationalises gate bahar or sudden closure of mill to intimidate workers or to minimise the possibility of conflict politics by the workers. Urgency is also used by the political society in the case of Bhangar to involve in an antagonistic relationship with the state. Here urgency arises from the need for self- defence.

Mutability refers to spatial reappropriation. This reappropriation involves changing the characteristics of space through land conversion or changing socio-spatial relationships. Mutability as a form of spatial adhocism is present in all three case studies and operationalised by the state, the political society as well as mutually by the state and the political society. For the postcolonial state, mutability is practised by accumulating capital without being fully registered and hence minimises the occurrence of conflict politics. People at the urban margins use mutability to occupy spaces and subsequently exert their rights to the city. At the intersections, the postcolonial state deploys selective allowance of rights for the dispossessed for their political survival.

Indeterminacy, as a form of spatial adhocism, is enacted by the postcolonial state through ambiguity. This ambiguity serves two purposes for the postcolonial state. Firstly, it allows the state or its apparatus to deploy discipline and dominance to the subaltern subjects through intimidation and making their situation precarious. By doing

so, it also attempts to change socio-spatial relations. Secondly, it also enables them to accumulate postcolonial capital without being fully registered. In the case of Loomtex, the state deploys indeterminacy through ambiguous categorisation of workers, whereas in the case of Bhangar, it allows them to bypass legalities associated with land acquisition and registration process.

The final typology of spatial adhocism is emergence. Here emergence represents forming new kinds of power networks and utilising them for creation of new socio-spatial relationships. In the case of Loomtex mill and Salt Lake, the people at the margins use emergence through quiet encroachment of the ordinary. The quiet encroachment happens through mobilising their social capital. In case of Salt Lake, the strange case of clientelism also represents emergence at the intersections as the state apparatus one way evicts the people at the but also simultaneously it rehabilitates some of the evicted ones into some other place.

The above discussion on adhocism is present in all three cases (from below and top), adhocism arises from urgency and reappropriation. The response to urgency is not an impromptu, ambiguous solution but rather a strategic mechanism operationalised through everyday repetitive and habitual practices of different actors and networks of power. The reappropriation of space happens through negotiations, violence and compromises. The reappropriation becomes part of the 'sphere of multiplicity' and is also relational (Massey, 2005). By adopting Massey's (2005) propositions, the thesis argues spatial adhocism not only unfolds the complexities and heterogeneities that are intrinsic elements of political society and the postcolonial state but also provides an alternative framework which reorients our understanding of urban politics, spatiotemporal subjectivities and postcolonial conditions in general. As a critique of normative theorisation, the typologies of spatial adhocism demonstrate how these categories are relational and iterative. Hence, as a methodological contribution, the framework of spatial adhocism firstly helps us to understand different subjectivities that exist within civil society, political society and the postcolonial state. By doing so, the thesis significantly contributes to the literature on the ethnography of state and subaltern politics. As an epistemic framework, spatial adhocism not only adds a spatiotemporal dimension to the understanding of 'political society'; but also shows the variability and dynamicity that exists within civil society, political society and the

postcolonial state. The thesis acknowledges the importance of Chatterjee's (2011) theorisation of political society to understand state-society relations. However, it also critiques such theorisation as it argues state-society relations are multiple, relational and incomplete when we analyse them spatially. I argue such a framework is essential to understand the nature and developmental politics of the postcolonial state.

Secondly, the typologies of spatial adhocism that this thesis contributes, represent the multiplicity, relational and indeterminant nature of categories in postcolonial urbanism. Hence, the thesis makes a proposition to include 'incompleteness' as a theoretical category which destabilises the theory building process and constructs the theorisation process as open-ended. Such an iterative theorisation not only makes theory-building as a generative process but also decentres urban theorisation from its centrality. This decentring of urban knowledge production not only makes us able to appreciate and acknowledge that certain vocabularies and knowledges are untranslatable, exist with their multiplicity and generative because hold the possibilities of 'creative' ruptures. Here, spatial adhocism becomes that discursive field of politics which unfolds complexities and dynamism of postcolonial urbanism; acknowledges the importance of a theory which is generative and 'yet to be built' and finally epistemologically decentres urban knowledge production.

The next section highlights how a framework for a comparative understanding of urban theorisation can be developed from this research.

7.6 Comparative Theorisation of the Urban

Over the last decade, the dynamism in the field of urban theorisation has been able to unsettle the universalising logic of urbanism. However, many of these theorisations fail to capture the different conditions of urbanity but rather focus on residual aspects of urbanism (Schindler, 2017). Southern urbanism, drawn from postcolonial theory, has successfully challenged the Eurocentric approach in urban theorisation. The processes in southern cities are distinctively different and open up possibilities for theorisation through critiquing its very own categories. At this juncture, the city becomes a category of practices which helps to decipher the reproduction of relations of power and practices which have socio-spatial manifestations (Wachsmuth, 2014; Jazeel, 2018b). Following the argument of treating the city as categories of practices,

this research maps differential patterns of conflict politics and interconnected trajectories of spatial adhocism. This analysis of practices helps to capture the illegibility of the state, the multiplicity of urban actors and contingent socio-spatial relations. Simone (2019) uses the analogy of photographic exposure to capture the conditions of urbanity which, following Lefebvre (1970/2003), he calls 'extended urbanization'. He states "Here, exposure means being attuned to events and circumstances beyond one's normal routines and interests. So exposure is a multifaceted intersection of vulnerability and opportunity; it is a by-product of precarity but also a way of dealing with that precarity at the same time, and this doubleness of sense is embodied by the background" (Simone, 2019:3). In this research, spatial adhocism acts as an exposure. Adhocism enables people at the urban margins to exert their rights in the city, whereas for postcolonial state adhocism is a means of reducing conflict politics. As a method of comparison is focuses on two things. Firstly, it gives importance to urban practices and demonstrates how these practices vary depends on the context, available resources and mobilisation ability. Secondly, the thesis focuses on two modes of comparison: a. comparing from differences (conflict politics) and b. compare with categories (spatial adhocism). This comparative understandings of urban outcomes as conflict politics and spatial adhocism help to map various practices and construct the urban as a discursive political field. Spatial adhocism continuously constructs categories and simultaneously defamiliarises itself from those categories. This can be understood with the deployment of different mechanisms separately by the state and political society but also at the intersections, it attempts to merge those categories and formulates a fluid socio-spatial subjectivity. As an analytical framework of practices, this research proposes three formations. Firstly, as spatial adhocism is omnipresent in postcolonial urbanism, it is important to catalogue practices of "permanent temporariness". Secondly, methodologically, the theorisation should include balanced tensions and negotiations between "unfinished pasts and unstable presents" (Raghuram, Noxolo and Madge, 2014). The methodology for theorisation should be iterative and generative of discursiveness. Finally, certain practices and vocabularies in postcolonial urbanisation are untranslatable. So, it is essential to acknowledge and compare untranslatability. This limits the generalisation bias of the theorisation process and focuses on the particularities of practices. By doing so, it attempts to decenter ecologies of urban knowledge which is discussed in the final section.

7.7 Epilogue

In his work on “Epistemologies of the South”, De Sousa Santos (2014) highlights that different forms of knowledge are incomplete in general. So, to achieve justice it is essential to incorporate this incompleteness of knowledge as a precondition. Modernity in the context of western epistemology often homogenises different ecologies of knowledge and attempts for universalisation and acts as an extension of colonial subjectivity (Mignolo, 2009; De Sousa Santos, 2014). To counter that Mignolo (2007, 2009) suggests epistemological delinking. This epistemological delinking is a transformative and iterative process (Mignolo, 2007). For De Sousa Santos (2014) the incompleteness of different knowledge systems and the differences between them can be understood through intercultural translation. Intercultural translation dislocates the hegemonic appropriation of knowledge and acknowledges heterogeneity and differences (De Sousa Santos, 2014). De Sousa Santos (2014) reminds us about six preconditions of intercultural translation. This research follows these six preconditions of translation and explains how this research aims to decentre knowledge production through interview techniques, transcribing, translation and finally representing the data and its analysis. This is discussed in the following table.

Table 15 Strategies Adopted for Decentring Knowledge

Principals	De Sousa Santos's Proposition	Strategies Adopted for the research
Principal 1- What to translate?	Translational contact zones are frontier zones where knowledge of the margins emerges	For untranslatable practices the research uses vernacular vocabularies which are considered as knowledge of the margins (e.g. Gate bahar); Verbatim transcription of the interviews was done so as not to distort the meaning and also to minimise self-bias and interpretation

Principal 2- To Translate from What into What?	Rendering possible constellations of struggles in the contact zone. Dialogical process.	Circulation of ethnography in terms of actors, solidarity networks and infrastructure of mobilisation are documented across three case studies; Framework of spatial adhocism adopts a dialogical process of assemblage
Principal 3- When to translate?	Taking into account different temporalities, rhythms and opportunities	Documentation of respondent's life history and identifying its impact on the strategies of conflict politics in Case study 2; documenting the genealogy of conflict politics for each of the cases
Principal 4- Who translates?	Democratisation of academic knowledge by involving non-academic social actors	Partially achieved; Using thick excerpts from the transcriptions as an analysis tool; Plan to write an article by crediting and making the respondents as co-authors
Principal 5- How to Translate?	Constructing arguments through iterations and rejecting normative arguments; use of non-dominant language for argumentation; documenting silences	Instead of any universal argument the analytical framework uses iterative categories focusing on particularities of practices; acknowledging the importance of non-verbal communications (stories from fieldnote as an analysis tool)

Principal 6- Why Translate?	Construct new and plural conceptions of social emancipation	Limiting exoticisation of respondents as only data points and continued interactions with some of them for mundane routines; Deromanticising the idea of change or resistance, rather portray it both as an opportunity and dispossession.
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By adopting these strategies, this research aims for three major contributions. Firstly, the research shows that the relationship between the postcolonial state and political society cannot be represented in a unilinear way; rather, it is much more complex and consists of an array of various relationships. Secondly, by identifying the state's presence through violence and also illegibility it critiques Chatterjee's (2011) conception of political society and goes beyond that conception by identifying the nuances of it. The thesis acknowledges the importance of Chatterjee's theorisation but critiques that by mapping the fluid subjectivity and multiple temporalities that exist within the state, civil society and the political society. This research also shows the spatial manifestation of these relationships in the context of Kolkata. Finally, the research shows how adhoc strategies are practised by both the state and the political society. It also broadens the understanding of the nature of the postcolonial state.

This research opens up the possibility of research on adhoc geographies in the context of postcolonial cities. Future research can adopt the methodological and analytical framework that is used for this research and may focus on practices for theorising postcolonial urbanism.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- List of Documents Consulted

- Association for Protection of Democratic Rights Letter to Jami, Jibika Committee, 09/08/2018
- Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948
- Investment and Industrial Policy of West Bengal, 2013
- Land Acquisition Act 1894
- Minutes of Meeting, South 24 Pargana's District Magistrate Office, 07/08/2018
- National Jute Board Act, 2008
- National Jute Policy 2005
- Smart City Roadmap, New Town, Kolkata, 2016
- Textile Policy 2013-2018
- The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952
- The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947
- The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972
- The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013
- The West Bengal Municipal Act 2017
- Vision 2025, Perspective Plan Kolkata Metropolitan Authority

Appendix 2- Newspaper Reports

- <https://www.anandabazar.com/state/baruipur-court-granted-bail-to-arabul-islam-in-bhangar-murder-case-dgtl-1.836953?ref=hm-ft-stry-ataglace-4>
- <https://www.anandabazar.com/state/government-reaches-in-agreement-with-bhangar-protesters-1.836736?ref=hm-sec-new-stry-state>
- <https://www.anandabazar.com/state/impasse-over-power-grid-s-bhangar-project-resolved-1.846434?ref=hm-topnav>
- <https://www.anandabazar.com/state/how-government-managed-to-appease-bhangor-agitators-an-untold-story-dgtl-1.847694?ref=hm-ft-stry-left-1>
- <http://www.groundxero.in/2018/08/16/interview-alik-chakraborty/>
- <http://raiot.in/in-what-language-does-rain-fall-over-tormented-cities/>
- https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170514/jsp/7days/story_151433.jsp
- <https://thewire.in/politics/west-bengal-political-violence>
- <https://thewire.in/politics/the-spectre-of-the-nrc-and-the-weaponisation-of-ignorance-in-west-bengal>
- <https://thewire.in/political-economy/the-unholy-nexus-of-land-development-and-violence-in-bengal>

Appendix 4- Ethics Approval

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

From Dr Claire Hewson
The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email Claire.hewson@open.ac.uk
Extension (6) 54519
To Raktim Ray
Project title Spatial Ad-hocism as Politics of Resistance: Theorizing Urban Politics in Kolkata
HREC ref HREC/2530/Ray
AMS ref



Memorandum

Date application submitted: 03/05/2017
Date of HREC response: 14/08/2017

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a favourable opinion by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please note the following:

1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast doubt on, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.
2. It is essential that any proposed amendments to the research are sent to the HREC for review, so they can be recorded and a favourable opinion given prior to any changes being implemented (except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is or may be effected).
3. Please include your HREC reference number in any documents or correspondence, also any publicity seeking participants or advertising your research, so it is clear that it has been reviewed by HREC and adheres to OU ethics review processes.
4. You are authorised to present this memorandum to outside bodies such as NHS Research Ethics Committees in support of any application for future research clearance. Also, where there is an external ethics review, a copy of the application and outcome should be sent to the HREC.
5. OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and where they exist, their frameworks for research ethics.
6. At the conclusion of your project, by the date you have stated in your application, you are required to provide the Committee with a final report to reflect how the project has progressed, and importantly whether any ethics issues arose and how they were dealt with. A copy of the final report template can be found on the research ethics website - http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/human-research-ethics-full-review-process-and-proforma#final_report.

Best regards

Dr Claire Hewson
The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee

www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/

January 2017

Appendix 4- Interview Consent Form

I have been asked to participate in **an interview** for the above project.

By signing this form, I confirm the following:

I have read the information sheet and the purpose and process of the project has been explained to me	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I withdraw, all of my information will be destroyed	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the interview will be recorded using a digital audio device	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the information given by me might be used in reports, publications and presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that even though the data may be hosted on the Open University's platform, my anonymity will be protected on this platform	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can choose not to answer certain interview questions without giving a reason and without penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to see a copy of the draft report resulting from this project	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me

Name:

.....

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

...

Please sign two copies of this form, one copy is for you to keep.

Appendix 5- Semi Structured Interview Details

Case Study	Respondents	Recorded (Y/N)	Duration
Loomtex Mill	Workers Group 1	Y	13 minutes 22 seconds
Loomtex Mill	Trade Union Leaders	Y	1 hour 22 minutes 15 seconds
Loomtex Mill	Community Mobiliser	Y	25 minutes 47 seconds
Loomtex Mill	Workers Group 2	Y	52 minutes 07 seconds
Loomtex Mill	Local Tyrant	Y	8 minutes 49 seconds
Loomtex Mill	Political Party Leader CPIML Red Star	Y	53 minutes 51 seconds
Loomtex and Bhangar	Political Party Leader CPIML Red Star	Y	27 minutes 49 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Squatter Dweller 1	Y	47 minutes 48 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Local Councillor	Y	35 minutes 52 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Citizen Forum	N (field notes)	25 minutes
Salt Lake Squatter	Squatter Dweller 2	Y	16 minutes 0 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Squatter Dweller 3	Y	1 hour 47 minutes 45 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Squatter Dweller 4	Y	1 hour 49 minutes 15 seconds

Salt Lake Squatter	Squatter Dweller 5	Y	1 hour 52 minutes 18 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Community Meetings 1	Y	20 minutes 23 seconds
Salt Lake Squatter	Mayor	N (field notes)	1 hour 10 minutes 8 seconds
Bhangar	Political Leader CPIML Red Star	Y	40 minutes 53 seconds
Bhangar	Police Officer	N (field notes)	15 minutes 0 seconds
Bhangar	Panchayat Member	Y	15 minutes 32 seconds
Bhangar	Land Broker	Y	1 hour 15 minutes 5 seconds
Bhangar	Panchayat Member	Y	36 minutes 7 seconds
Bhangar	Community Mobiliser	Y	33 minutes 55 seconds
Bhangar	Community Mobiliser	Y	1 hour 1 minutes 5 seconds
Bhangar	Political Leader CPIML Red Star	Y	1 hour 46 minutes 39 seconds
Bhangar	Political Leader CPIM	Y	42 minutes 40 seconds
Bhangar	Community Meetings 1	Y	1 hour 55 minutes 45 seconds
Bhangar	Community Meetings 2	Y	45 minutes 44 seconds

Appendix 6- Interview Questions

Loomtex Mill	
Participants	Interview Questions
Mill workers	<p>a) Occupational history: types of occupation, involvement in the mill, wage, other benefits from mill (health or any other)</p> <p>b) Residential history: duration of stay, rent, access to basic services, land title, mechanism for space expansion or better access to basic services</p> <p>c) Migration history: place of origin, reasons, duration, circular migration</p> <p>d) Political involvement: political party membership, trade union membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences, difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>e) Right claims: availability of identity documents, status of asset ownership, resource claims, sense of segregation, process of grievance redressal,</p> <p>f) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the violent outbreak in 2014</p> <p>g) Welfare benefit: types of benefits, process of obtaining that, involvement of M.L.A/ M.P. or local councillor</p>

Trade union leaders	<p>a) Organisational profile: duration of operation, membership, leadership, mechanisms and involvement in electoral politics within mill</p> <p>b) Activity: involvement in mill related activities, involvement in non- mill activities, negotiation strategies with workers/mill managers/ mill owners/local political leaders/state level leaders, relation with other unions</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the violent outbreak in 2014</p> <p>d) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of mill workers during elections (mill/ urban local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services</p> <p>e) Political affiliation: relation with the mother party, mechanisms and involvement in electoral politics (urban local body/ state/ central)</p>
Political party workers/ Grassroots leaders	<p>a) Political affiliation: relation with the respective trade union, political affiliation history, mechanisms and involvement in mill issues</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of mill workers during elections (mill/ urban local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance,</p>

	<p>mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the violent outbreak in 2014</p>
Slum lords	<p>a) Residential history: duration of stay, rent, access to basic services, land title, mechanism for space expansion or better access to basic services</p> <p>b) Migration history: place of origin, reasons, duration, circular migration</p> <p>c) Political involvement: political party membership, trade union membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences, difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>d) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the violent outbreak in 2014</p> <p>e) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of mill workers during elections (mill/ urban local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services</p>

Salt Lake Squatter	
Participants	Interview Questions
Non-evicted residents	<p>a) Occupational history: types of occupation, wage, location of employment, change in occupation</p> <p>b) Residential history: duration of stay, rent, access to basic services, land title, mechanism for space expansion or better access to basic services</p> <p>c) Migration history: place of origin, reasons, duration, circular migration</p> <p>d) Political involvement: political party membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences, difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>e) Right claims: availability of identity documents, status of asset ownership, resource claims, sense of segregation, process of grievance redressal, status of rehabilitation package</p> <p>f) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than anti eviction movement, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion and involvement in 2010 eviction drive</p>
Evicted residents	<p>a) Occupational history: types of occupation, wage, location of employment, change in occupation</p> <p>b) Residential history: duration of stay, rent, access to basic services, land title, mechanism for space expansion or better access to basic services, impact of eviction, comparison between previous and current place</p>

	<p>c) Migration history: place of origin, reasons, duration, circular migration</p> <p>d) Political involvement: political party membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences, difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>e) Right claims: availability of identity documents, status of asset ownership, resource claims, sense of segregation, process of grievance redressal, status of rehabilitation package</p> <p>f) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than anti eviction movement, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion and involvement in 2010 eviction drive</p>
Local councillor	<p>a) Political affiliation: political affiliation, relation with the respective community leaders, history of electoral representation</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of community during elections (urban local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services, initiatives in implementation of welfare schemes and programs (state/central)</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome</p>

	<p>of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the eviction drive of 2010</p> <p>d) Governance: Constitution of ward committees, status of area sabhas (public participation meetings of urban local bodies), utilisation status of MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme), process of grievance redressal</p>
Citizen Forum	<p>a) Residential history: duration of stay</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: reasons for movement, resources used, strategies</p> <p>c) Vision for city, aspirations</p>

Bhangar Movement	
Participants	Interview Questions
Affected landowners	<p>a) Occupational history: types of occupation, wage, location of employment, change in occupation</p> <p>b) Land details: land holding size, land conversion history, current land price, probable impact of power plant on land</p> <p>c) Residential history: duration of stay, access to basic services, land title, mechanism for space expansion or better access to basic services, impact of eviction, comparison between previous and current place</p> <p>d) Migration history: place of origin, reasons, duration, circular migration</p> <p>e) Political involvement: political party membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences,</p>

	<p>difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>f) Right claims: availability of identity documents, status of asset ownership, resource claims, sense of segregation, process of grievance redressal, status of rehabilitation package</p> <p>g) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than the current movement, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion and involvement in current movement</p>
<p><i>Jami, Jibika, Poribesh O Bastutantra Raksha</i> Committee leaders and or grassroots leaders</p>	<p>a) Residential history: duration of stay, rent, access to basic services, land title, land holding size</p> <p>b) Political involvement: political party membership, history of political activities, role of local councillor and political party workers, voting preferences, difference observed in political regime change (state and central), police/ criminal records</p> <p>c) Right claims: availability of identity documents, status of asset ownership, resource claims, sense of segregation, process of grievance redressal, opinion on land acquisition and conversion</p> <p>d) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of community during elections (rural local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services, current mobilisation mechanisms and strategies</p> <p>e) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance,</p>

	<p>mobilisation mechanism- leadership, outcome of protest/ resistance, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion and involvement in current movement</p>
<p>Political party workers</p>	<p>a) Political affiliation: political affiliation history, mechanisms and involvement in community issues</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of mill workers during elections (rural local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the current movement</p>
<p>Police officials</p>	<p>a) Perception of resistance: opinion about community demand, opinion about the current movement, mobilisation of resources and strategies to curtail resistance, implementation of state instruction, status of PIL (Public Interest Litigation)</p> <p>b) Crime profiling of jurisdiction: types of crimes, no. of offenders, repeat offender's history</p>
<p>CPIML Red Star and CPIM Leaders</p>	<p>a) Political affiliation: political affiliation, relation with the respective community leaders, history of electoral representation</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of community during elections (rural local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in</p>

	<p>access to housing or basic services, initiatives in implementation of welfare schemes and programs (state/central)</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest mechanisms, opinion about the current movement</p> <p>d) Governance: Constitution of ward committees, status of gram sabhas (public participation meetings of rural local bodies), utilisation status of MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme), process of grievance redressal</p>
Panchayet (rural local body) head	<p>a) Political affiliation: political affiliation, relation with the respective community leaders, history of electoral representation</p> <p>b) Resource mobilisation: Mass mobilisation of community during elections (rural local body/ state/ central), support to the local residents for obtaining welfare benefits, support to the local residents in access to housing or basic services, initiatives in implementation of welfare schemes and programs (state/central)</p> <p>c) Participation in resistance: involvement in protest including duration, types of protest/ resistance, mobilisation mechanism- leadership, resource mobilisation (financial, people, strategies), outcome of protest/ resistance, participation in protest other than mill issues, any prior training or knowledge in protest</p>

	<p>mechanisms, opinion about the current movement</p> <p>d) Governance: Constitution of ward committees, status of gram sabhas (public participation meetings of rural local bodies), utilisation status of MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme), process of grievance redressal</p>
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